

NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION, RACISM AND EDUCATION: THE MODEL MINORITY THESIS IN EDUCATION POLICY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

How do education policies intended to create equitable educational opportunities for racial minorities in the US unintentionally exacerbate racial inequality? What can we do about it? “Neoliberal Globalization, Model Minority Politics and Education Policy Research” traces current trends in US education policy research discourse about Asians to argue that prevailing conservative and liberal social justice based paradigms abstract race and, in some critical ways, dematerialize potentially transformative anti-racist strategies in education. (Melamed, 2011; Darder & Torres, 2004; Darder, 2012; McCarthy, 1991) I further argue that patterns of racialization and racism are radically shifting in the most recent period of neoliberal globalization such that the power of race to signify, differentiate, and hierarchically order trajectories of educational opportunity is being actualized to an extraordinary degree even while anti racist strategy and social justice initiatives in education increase. (Pedroni, 2011) My final argument is that an interdisciplinary approach to educational policy research, which I summarize as Wave Theory, can rematerialize anti-racist policy analysis, strategy and social justice based initiatives in education.

for my family

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Methodology	34
Chapter 3 The Model Minority	49
Chapter 4 The Education of South Asians in the U.S.....	88
Chapter 5 Wave Theory.....	122
Chapter 6 Conclusion	160
References.....	168

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the neoliberal agenda¹ continues to effectively target education and all public spaces. At best, neoliberal reforms recruit students and youth as the bearers of its ideological cause, at worst they end up dying through a politics of war and denial – in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, but also right here in the “heartland.” While the US social movement in education against neoliberalism is strengthening in force and momentum, neoliberalism still remains the dominant policy direction of our time, and the stakes are higher than ever (Lipman, 2004; Lipman, 2011).

Global inequality has sharply increased during the most recent phase of

¹ Neoliberalism here is defined most closely in relation to David Harvey’s (2005) approach in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Neoliberalism is an approach to economic organization that is often also referred to as globalization. Even though Neoliberalism is in the first right an economic agenda of global scale, its force has waves that are felt at every level of societal organization, from the organization of state space to the organization of technological systems, education systems and even personal relationships. According to Harvey, “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit.” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2)

neoliberal reform, since the 1980's, while global wealth has also sharply increased during this same period of time. While the Global South countries have margins of inequality in comparison to the US that are profoundly sad and unjust, to say the least, the largest margins of inequality within a country exist, not in the Global South countries, but in the USA and the UK (Pieterse, 2002).

Since the 1970's, Neoliberalism has quickened the pace at which countries are incorporated into its structural framework and ideological pathos (Harvey, 2005). Indeed, Neoliberalism requires that "all societies, economies, institutions down to the level of the individual have to adapt, compete and abide by the objective laws of the market" (Kamat, 2011). There are two sides in this battle, those who are for neoliberal globalization and those who are against it. There is no in between. By virtue of our positioning within the field of education then, and policy research in particular, we are charged with the task of mapping relations of inequality and injustice that persevere and intensify in education, so that we can overturn the neoliberal regime and establish a world, not just an education system, that is safe, equal, and values freedom in the deepest sense of the word (Friere, 2006). Idealism and militancy in these struggles should not be ridiculed or passed off as naïve by people who claim to be the wiser. Students, our own children, deserve that kind of a world, that kind of education, and if they do not have it is not their fault – as a majority of educational theories attempting to explain racial inequality in education as cultural distinctiveness and cultural maladaptation would argue.

In this dissertation I analyze the 'model minority' figure in educational policy

research as one path specific example of the tactics, dangers and outcomes of the neoliberal regime. In this introductory chapter I discuss the topic, purpose and organization of this dissertation, along with the methodology I used and research archives I examined. I begin however, by describing important terms and conceptual assumptions including: What is Neoliberal globalization? What is the relationship between Neoliberal Globalization, Race and Racism? What is the Model Minority thesis?

Neoliberal Globalization

People travel different routes when trying to map changes that warrant the invention of the term 'globalization'. Arrighi (1999) argues that globalization is marked by a diffusion of imperialism under new spatial, political, economic and social logics and warns against an autonomous state centered and/or economy centered mapping of globalization which would distort the reorganization of power. For him, imperialism is not just something that is a unidirectional exercise of power from the center countries onto the periphery countries. Imperialism is mapped across urban centers around the world including in the third world and the US, though with varying scales and degrees of power.

For Harvey (1990) globalization begins with the shift from Fordism to flexible accumulation regimes. Likewise, McMichael (1996) and Comoroff and Comoroff (2000) locate globalization with the rise of speculative capital. McMichael (1996) warns against the violence of abstraction and urges us to understand globalization as an historical political project in which a global ruling class has formed and capitalism has overtaken

State power despite the specification, incorporation, and re-articulation of local politics and struggles in relation to the State form. He suggests that the US as a coherent state form must not be taken for granted as something of itself and for itself. Transnational alliances impact what is happening in the US and vice versa. Comoroff and Comoroff (2000) locate globalization with the increasing autonomy of capital from labor. Tsing (2005) sees globalization as the reinscription of race and gender relations under new structural, spatial and social logics that can be mapped within the dialectical relationship between the State and capitalism.

The definition of Neoliberalism is itself a contested issue and additionally, Neoliberalism looks different based upon the context. Neoliberalism evolved historically through a set of economic policies that are based upon the assumption that:

open, competitive and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference represent the optimal mechanism for economic growth... Neoliberal doctrines were deployed to justify, among other projects, the deregulation of state control over major industries, assaults on organized labor, the reduction of corporate taxes, the shrinking and/or privatization of public services, the dismantling of welfare programs, the enhancement of international capital mobility, the intensification of interlocality competition, and the criminalization of the urban poor. (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, pg. 350)

As a policy regime Neoliberalism and globalization intersect in a process that results in the formation of a multicultural transnational elite class and increasing margins of poverty both within the US and around the world. In his essay, "The

Unmaking of Education in the Age of Globalization, Neoliberalism and Information,” Cameron McCarthy (2011) maps the way that the market ethic is mapped onto education in ideological, political and economic terms and how race and gender as axes of identity and bodily differentiation are incorporated into the Neoliberal regime often under discourse of race neutrality, color blindness and even anti-racism, to only further create opportunities for capitalist accumulation. The education sector, he argues, is caught at the interstices of “movement and stasis” wherein the world is moving apace while the education system itself is stuck in the past, at best, and becomes further incorporated as cog in the wheels of Neoliberalism quickening the pace at which youth are incorporated in the Neoliberal regime, at worst. (McCarthy, 2011)

Neoliberal Globalization, Racism and Education

Contemporary problems of racial inequality in US education must be analyzed in terms of the radical political, economic and ideological reorganization of society that is occurring under the logics of neoliberal globalization. The context of globalization has created several contradictions that are counter-intuitive. The question that education policy analysts wrestle with is how to best map processes of inequality in times of increasing contradictions and diversifying policy frameworks? Here I develop the analysis of Wave Theory, which is actually a theoretical and methodological toolbox for analyzing educational policy under the regime of neoliberal globalization.

There is an inextricable relationship between racism and neoliberal globalization. The dynamics of racism vary with geographical context. This is not as simple as to say

that there is 'more and less' racism here or there, but that the way it operates is uneven, contradictory, the 'race rules' in one context can be completely the opposite in another. Following Jodi Melamed in her brilliant work, "Represent and Destroy" I argue that anti racism in the US, as a state-sponsored endeavor, has become 'dematerialized' even while state sponsored anti-racism regimes have flourished. (Melamed, 2011)

Educational policy research directly informs every aspect of educational space including curriculum, pedagogy, access, evaluation, climate and social relations. As I analyze education policy research as discourse, I am analyzing the assumptions and theoretical foundations concerning race, class, gender, the nation and other trajectories that are used to legitimize critical decisions about education that allow for the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and the ruthless deprivation and exploitation of the world's majority – even under the discourse and politics of anti-racism and social justice.

A primary argument that I make in this dissertation is that the prevailing conservative and liberal perspectives begin with very problematic assumptions about race, class and other hierarchical identities and intersecting social systems; problematic assumptions about what race is, what racism is, and who is responsible for racism. (Darder and Torres, 2004) I argue that while these assumptions are made under the rubric of anti-racism, following Jodi Melamed (2011), they in fact strengthen the hegemonic currency of white supremacy as a fundamentally structuring aspect of neoliberal globalization. Educational space is indeed constructed by dominant regimes of discourses and beliefs. One could correctly argue that any regime of discourse and

belief would be an imposition. (Foucault, 1980) However what we can do is engage in a constant process of action and reflection in order to craft an anti-racist strategy in education that not only is 'inclusive' of more people of color, but that challenges the very foundations of white supremacy, namely, Neoliberalism. (Friere, 1997; Darder, 2002; Darder & Torres, 2004)

In this dissertation I specifically describe how racial inequality is problematically conceptualized in conservative and liberal approaches to educational policy research. (Darder, 2012) I further breakdown and codify the archive on Asians in education into what I have determined to be three prevailing approaches to addressing the question of race: biological, cultural –psychological and cultural-sociological approaches. (Friere, 1998) The problematic conceptualization of race and racism within education policy research, and the role it plays in supporting neoliberal globalization, has terrible consequences for students, and particularly children and youth who are our most vulnerable populations. (McCarthy, 2011) My dissertation joins up with other researchers that map how education as a critical sector is used for the reproduction of racist capitalism and capitalist racism, even if guised under the discourse of social justice and official anti-racism (Melamed, 2011). Still I argue that education, as well as other public spaces, are potentially transformative spaces that have the power to truly engage and rematerialize social justice work. (Darder 2002; Friere, 1998; McCarthy, 2011)

In more specific terms, Neoliberal globalization articulates with post-colonial histories in locally and historically specific ways (Kamat, 2004; Lugo, 2008). The articulation of neoliberal globalization with post colonial and neo colonial histories

exacerbates the racial divide and gender divide and/or incorporates gendered and racialized bodies into the neoliberal capitalist system in ways that are more “productive” for the owning classes. (Lugo, 2008)

At the same time, the logic and dynamics of racism and patriarchy have contradictory spatial dynamics. We find undeniable examples of how racism and white nationalist US patriarchy emerge as powerful explanatory frameworks for understanding inequality and exploitation in “actually existing” and geographically specific instances of neoliberal exploitation, however the logics of one geographic space don’t necessarily roll over to another (Brenner, 2002; Kamat, 2011; Kamat, 2004; Lugo, 2008). Kamat’s (2004) call to map the articulation of Neoliberalism with postcolonial histories and fundamentalism in India, or Lugo’s (2008) example of the articulation of Neoliberalism with US domestic and transnational histories of colonialism, patriarchy and sexual conquest, offer powerful examples of what is possible when it comes to mapping racism and rematerializing anti-racism despite the contradictory and counterintuitive logics of globalization (Kamat, 2004; Lugo, 2008). Education is desperately in need of a flexible analytical and methodological approach for understanding the contradictions of our time along multiple trajectories of racial, gendered, national and class differentiation. (McCarthy, 2011)

In this dissertation I present Wave Theory as a theoretical and methodological response to contemporary tensions and contradictions – tensions that have been covered over by the prevailing frameworks for analyzing racial inequality in US education. Wave Theory is a derivative of the *Nonsynchronous* position (McCarthy,

1996). Wave Theory is very much inspired by contemporary ethnographic works, such as Kamat (2011) and Lugo (2008) to name a few, that are able to map the deeper connections between colonialism and neoliberal globalization, as they are experienced at the micro level of life, as well as the macro political, economic and ideological levels. Wave Theory draws on theories of materiality, cultural geography, space and spatiality, ethnography, and historiography to offer a framework in which the primary benefit is that it allows for the analysis of a level of contradiction and geographic and spatial specificity that is simply not possible with the prevailing, and distorting, conservative and liberal frameworks in education, yet is present in the methodologies deployed by education researchers who are analyzing race, gender, education policy and neoliberal globalization in its various, “actually existing” manifestations (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Kamat, 2011; Lipman, 2011; Pedroni, 2011; McCarthy, 2011; Darder, 2012).

The Model Minority Discourse

The model minority discourse is the prevailing ideological assertion about Asians in the US. The idea is that we Asians have pulled ourselves up by our bootstraps in an ultimately meritocratic US educational system. The question posed then, is that if so many disadvantaged Asians can succeed, including Asian women and the working class, why can't African Americans, Chicanos/Latinos, Indigenous people, and other non-white racialized groups? (Prashad, 2000). The model minority discourse posits that Asians, conceived as a uniform cultural unit, have evolved a superior cultural value, familial, and belief system as well as a superior work ethic that allows us to achieve social and

economic advancement despite any obstacles we face. In this dissertation I will explain how the model minority discourse, as historically applicable to Asians in US education, plays a primary role in processes of racial and gendered exploitation within a transnational network of neoliberal capitalist regimes and the retreat of the social welfare state.

Research on Asians in US education specifically wrestles with one fundamental question: why do Asian² students consistently outperform other students? This question brings with it two false assumptions. The first is that Asians are 'outperforming' other students. The second is that measurements of educational outcomes and performance are objective, neutral, and superior indicators of educational achievement. The model minority discourse contradictorily attempts to homogenize differences among Asians on the one hand, while on the other hand celebrating cultural distinctiveness and identity. By representing Asians as a model minority compared to other minority groups, the discourse indirectly legitimizes the superiority of whiteness and neocolonial systems of educational measurements and qualifications, while further positioning non-white racialized communities, including whites who are racialized as not quite white, for the racialized exploitation of labor (Wray, 2006). Further, the model minority discourse uses a politics of identity that is strongly rooted in social psychological traditions to explain

² In this study the term Asian and Asian American are used interchangeably because the model minority thesis homogenizes differences between groups within the Asian category, It is important to note, however, that the difference between Asian and Asian American is a political one and has more to do with changing racialization patterns than with national affiliation. While 'Asians' are generally perceived as first generation immigrants while Asian Americans are perceived as second generation immigrants other indicators, such as language, accent, citizenship, and immigration status, are usually used to determine whether one is Asian or Asian American. (Cadge, 2012)

educational disparities. This completely sidelines the central role of neoliberal globalization on education and its concomitant restructuring of social, political and economic life as well as the subjective positions that are available to individuals within the neoliberal paradigm for development (Pedroni, 2006).

The flip side of the model minority discourse is the “Asian Invasion” discourse (Okihiro, 1994; Kawai, 2005). Throughout US history, and in popular culture in particular, there has been a perpetual fear of Asians outnumbering the whites, outperforming the whites, and ultimately taking over the whites. Consider for example, late 19th century discourses about “Yellow Peril” and “Hindoo Invasion” with the more recent “China-bashing” rhetoric in the Obama-Romney presidential debates. (Takaki, 1998; Bohan, 2012) In education, Asian Invasion discourse is related to the rise of testing and evaluation regimes as well as a generalized anxiety, across the STEM fields in particular, that associates students in China and India as unilaterally outperforming US students. (Dillon, 2010) The kind of fear mongering associated with the model minority/Asian invasion dialectic creates a host of fears about the status and future of the US economy, job market and its role as global superpower within the popular US imagination (Prashad, 2002). These fears are largely framed to support the rise of neoliberal education policies and testing regimes as a “defense” against the rising economies.

The model minority thesis has slightly different nuances that relate to gender differences. In an article titled “Labor and Gender in Asian Immigrant Families,” Yen Le Espiritu (1999) analyzed labor and employment trends in the US amongst Asian low-

wage, self-employed and professional earners. He argues that the transition for Asian men to 'men of color' in the US context has actually decreased the employability of Asian men. On the other hand, race and gender preferences for Asian women have actually increased the employability of Asian women in the US. This has led to a range of challenges both for women, men and families as they struggle to negotiate radical differences related to the division of labor and authority, particularly in the context of the Asian family and/or intimate relations. He further argues that despite their changed status as primary and sometimes sole earners in the family, because of racial and gender preferences in the labor market as well as the system of racism and patriarchy in society, women still remain less likely to mediate their social positioning as gendered and enraced subjects (ie, they do not necessarily have more power in the family or in society). This study points to the way that Asian men and women lose or gain mobility in the labor market according to whether or not they perform model minority identity, and the performance of this identity is inextricably tied to their ability to survive or simply move forward economically. (Espiritu, 1999)

This dissertation then, is an exercise in mapping and interpreting the new model minority politics, as it emerges in US educational discourses and in transnational, neoliberal, policy contexts. I argue that biological, cultural-sociological and cultural psychological analytical frameworks in education, for mapping the model minority discourse across policy contexts, are severely inadequate (McCarthy, 1988; McCarthy, 2011). I illustrate this argument with the example of South Asians in US education. I finally argue that wave theory, as represented in interdisciplinary approaches to

educational policy research, is better suited for mapping the spatialization of racism, inequality and resistance in neoliberal times.

To illustrate my description of model minority politics in the US, I typologize the research literature on Asians in US education with a focus on how the model minority discourse is treated. I categorize this research in terms of biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological approaches and I argue that there are strong tendencies and patterns that emerge in the literature that justify this typological delineation (McCarthy, 1988; Hall, 1980). These approaches will be assessed in terms of their strengths and limitations for analyzing and addressing the problem of racism in education, and also for addressing the problematic positioning of Asians in educational discourses specifically.

My research on Asians in US educational discourses, and the case of South Asians in particular, reveals contradictions in all of these three theoretical approaches to addressing the problem of racial inequality in education and how they are shaped by the model minority discourse. Still, the model minority discourse, though factually incorrect, remains a powerful force shaping mainstream educational research and educational politics in the US and abroad (Caudill & Devos, 1956; Levine & Montero, 1975; Light, 1972; Kitano, 1969; Peterson, 1971; Battacharya, 2000; Cheng & Yang, 2000; Kawai, 2005; Leung, 2002; Maira, 2010; Mathew & Prashad, 2000; Menon, 2006; Prashad, 2012)

The biological, cultural sociological and cultural psychological theories are not adequate challenges to the hegemonic power of the model minority thesis, and in fact, often reinforce stereotyped and essentialized depictions of Asians, to the material

detriment of anti-racist strategy in education, the very strategy they claim to represent. (Melamed, 2011; Darder, 2012) These discourses converge with the ideology of Neoliberalism and genetic based racism, in their affirmation of the locus of educational difference within the realm of attitudinal variables that are derivatives of “culture,” psychology, the body, family, individualized person-hood and inner capacities (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Mau, 1997; Cheng and Yang, 2000; Jiobu, 1988; Fejgin, 1995; Hsia, 1998; Goyette & Xie, 1999; Grier-Reed & Ganuza, 2011; Regin & Adams, 1990; Pang, 1991). These discourses also lend themselves to the use of patriarchal, cultural nationalist discourses, on the part of Asians, to explain Asian exceptionalism (Pearce & Linn, 2007; Leung, 2002) These discourses, even when challenging the model minority discourse, still place the onus for reversing the effects of racism onto “silenced” Asians (Gibson, 1988; Zhou & Bankston, 1998; Lee, 2005; Lew, 2006; Park, 2011).

While my arguments regarding the limitations of these three camps of educational research and theory can be made in relation to the way they treat any and every racial or ethnic group including whites, I explicate the case of South Asian history and education in the US to substantiate and provide examples of my assertions as well as to justify the usefulness of Wave Theory. I historically position South Asians in the US within changing racial formations that have emerged as a result of neoliberal policy contexts since the Cold War, 9/11, the War on Terror and rise of Hindu fundamentalist nationalism (Prashad, 2012). Despite successful attempts amongst South Asians to be accepted as model minorities in relation to other non-white racialized groups, South Asians have never fit neatly into the mainstream model minority narrative, this is most

obvious with the most recent wave of working class and poor immigrants whose “educational performance” is much below their South Asians peers (Maira, 2010). This is further evident in the lengths South Asian ‘community’ members go in order to cover up imperfections such as domestic violence, exploitation of labor within the family, and child abuse. Lastly, my dissertation research is also located within discussions about how to recover from challenges created by the legacy of mainstream, multicultural, and neo-Marxist approaches to analyzing US education. My research can also then be situated in those debates that wrestle with how to best craft a theoretical and analytical framework that does justice to representing racialized realities in the context of 21st century neoliberal globalization as they exist in the US and transnationally. Here is precisely where Wave Theory offers something productive.

In brief, I argue in this dissertation that model minority politics must be reinterpreted to account for recent phases of neoliberal globalization. I argue that the stakes are higher now than they ever have been for those who can benefit from the discourse and those who are pushed out of model minority, “whiteness on probation,” status. (Prashad, 2012, pg. 3) This is also creating an intra-racial dynamic amongst Asians with disastrous consequences, as we can see, for example, from the exclusion of working class South Asians from education. I argue that existing conservative and liberal frameworks within educational policy research do not provide an adequate theoretical or analytical framework for understanding the relationship between Asians, education and transnational networks of power and in fact distort our social positioning. This is

important because these networks have disastrous, material impacts on people across the globe.

I finally argue that interdisciplinary approaches to education policy research, from both within and beyond the disciplinary field of education, offer productive analytical resources that move us beyond the biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological traps. The model minority discourse has much more currency in the US because of the nation centric way that education policy research, and even anti-racist education policy research, is conducted. One simply has to look at the margins of poverty in India and China to see that not all Asians are successful. Anti-racist research in education in the US can gain much with theories of materiality, studies in cultural geography, space and spatiality, and methods of ethnography and historiography that don't sacrifice the here for the there, nor the there for the here, but are able to draw the lines that form a single, coherent framework for understanding race and gender relations in the US in the context of race and gender relations internationally. In the next section I review more closely those challenges specifically associated with education policy research in the US. I a

The Problem of Multiculturalism

Within the educational literature, racial disparities in education are largely interpreted in terms of cultural variables associated with the oppressed and oppressor groups. My study is needed because it directly challenges those cultural theories, in their biological, cultural-psychological, and cultural-sociological variants, which would place the onus for racism back onto those bodies that are most subject to its exploitation. The educational policy research that I identify and critique in this dissertation fits very broadly into the problematic category of multicultural education policy approaches.

In their article, "Traveling Multiculturalism: A Trinational Debate in Translation," Stam and Shohat (2005) describe how US critics using the term 'multiculturalism' are in fact using a hegemonic term. They argue that "multiculturalism is above all protean, plural, conjunctural, and it exists in shifting relation to various institutions, discourses, disciplines, communities, and nation-states." (Stam and Shohat, 2005) They argue that the assertion of 'multiculturalism' as a thing in itself, particularly in the US context, is as an act of US nationalism and that "this situation calls not only for a reflexivity about national narcissism but also for a transnational examination of the linked modes of institutional racism within diverse spaces in the era of globalization, all seen as rooted in international, historically linked, and contrapuntally imaginable histories." (Stam and Shohat, 2005)

Following their argument, within education there are various strands of analysis about race that are often grouped as 'multicultural' including critical race theory, critical

race feminism, racial formation theory, phenomenology, social justice education, and intergroup dialogue to name a few. Each of these strands has nuanced assumptions about the nature of race and racism and how racism can be mapped. That being said, here I provide a history of ‘multicultural education’ to describe the scoping historical trajectory and critiques of multiculturalism that have emerged in the education policy research. In the next section however, I further delineate specific trends and analytical imaginaries within what is popularly approached as ‘multicultural’ education policy research, that include biological, cultural-sociological, and cultural – psychological frameworks. While these three labels themselves are impositions that cover over nuanced differences they also point out to two important differences in the literature on race, namely, that research which argues that racism is endemic to societies and autonomous from class (though, ‘intersectional’) and that research which suggests a more dynamic, historical and contradictory view of race and racism, which argues that it is very much linked to the way society is structured and organized economically, which indeed can change.

In her invaluable and painstaking contribution to studies on race and racism in the US, *Represent and Destroy*, Jodi Melamed (2011) provides a periodization of US history during which “dominant anti-racisms have disconnected racial reference from material conditions, even as they have linked the overcoming of racism to US leadership for global capitalism.” (Melamed, 2011) She follows that under “Neoliberalism, antiracism has become so abstracted and dematerialized that now, at the same time that a multicultural formalism provides unity for national and global publics, racial

capitalism is as vicious as ever, spurred by neoliberal conditions of extreme wealth inequality and the privatization of race based exclusions.” (Melamed, 2011) Melamed’s historiography offers three US periods distinguished by differing economic, political and ideological relations: racial liberalism, racial multiculturalism and neoliberal multiculturalism.

Educational policy discourses that emerged within these three historical periods, as discussed in the first three chapters of this dissertation, follow similar patterns of dematerializing race in education. In the US national context it is most popularly accepted that multicultural education emerged in response to the Civil Rights Movement. Some however trace its roots to assimilation movements beginning as early as the late 1800’s, even earlier to anti-colonial and/or assimilationist responses to colonialism by Native and African Americans, or even in the political Garveyism of the 1920’s (Chapman, 2004). Arguably, the origins of Multicultural Education are located in the eye of the historian. I can say that those who locate the origins of Multicultural Education during the early colonial period tend to see it as a neoconservative strategy for the suppression of black and brown radicalism. Those who locate the origins of multiculturalism later in US history, during the Civil Rights Movement for example, tend to validate it as a critical response to mainstream education, whether liberal or radical, and a break from the assimilation model. I argue in this paper that multicultural education, as it is popularly accepted in educational discourses and environments, is not a solution for the problems it sets out to address, namely, racism, sexism and the host of other “isms” related to social identity and the capitalist state system.

What multicultural education looks like, and what it is for, is a contested issue as well. Asher (2007) notes that, “even as educational researchers and practitioners agree on the need to address the struggles of those on the margins, their perspectives and approaches regarding the relevance, scope, methods and intended outcomes of multicultural education differ.” (Asher, 2007) Multicultural education presents different sets of problematics and debates across the range of educational research areas such as policy, curriculum, teacher education, and pedagogy. For the purposes of the history I provide here however, my emphasis will be on the historical waves of policy orientations taken by federal and state education policy makers towards the education of non-white racialized groups and immigrant groups and about non-white racialized groups in the US. I intend to discuss what these policy orientations meant in terms of the curriculum and implied strategies for social justice. I will describe the development of multiculturalism in 4 distinct waves: the Intercultural Education wave, the Intergroup Education wave, the Civil Rights wave, and the Multicultural/Ethnic Studies wave (Grant & Sleeter, 1986).

Before the Civil War, it was effectively illegal for non-whites to attend formal institutions of education. The education of slaves and “free” Native Americans was used primarily as a tool for religious conversion and assimilation. The teaching of literacy practices to slaves, and even the gathering of slaves, was strictly regulated and often prohibited for fear that this would lead to slave revolt. The idea was that liberal and conservative whites were “freeing” slaves and Indigenous people from the harshness of the slave economy and their own barbarism by introducing them to the Christian

religion. During the Reconstruction period of 1865 – 1877, Freedmen, blacks who were formerly slaves, began entering formal institutions of education. This is when a range of discourses and a new politics emerged about how to best educate non-white people and about non-white people in institutional educational environments. Multicultural educational discourse is one strand of these discourses and politics, the strand that has seemed to emerge as the most enduring. (Grant & Sleeter, 1986)

In Grant's taxonomy, the first wave of multiculturalism in education is the intercultural education movement. (Grant, 1986) Montalto (1981) located this movement between 1924 - 1941. The intercultural education movement was an attempt to transcend the kind of argumentation that spoke of biological differences between races for an argumentation that took a socio - environmental approach to difference. Still the intercultural movement offered an assimilation model where, despite difference, non-white racialized groups and immigrant groups, including European whites, were to be socially and morally molded vis a vis the curriculum into some sort of pan American identity. Difference then, was regarded as something that needed to be "respected" but ultimately changed so that such person could fit into the idealized whole of American society and identity. (Banks, 1993; Montalto, 1981)

Olneck (1990) writing on the relationship between intercultural education and multicultural education argues that the two movements have subtle discursive differences, but are ultimately both related in the sense that they "delimit a sanitized cultural sphere divorced from sociopolitical interests...and they depict ethnic conflict as predominantly the consequence of negative attitudes and ignorance about

manifestations of difference which they seem to remedy by cultivating empathy, appreciation and understanding.” (Olneck, 1990)

In policy terms, the intercultural phase began with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 that included as stipulation the Asian Exclusion Act and National Origins Act. These selective immigration policies drastically limited immigration from Southern Europe, Asia and Latin America while allowing, though in a limited percentage, for immigration mainly from Northern European countries. The US organized labor movement of the intercultural phase was largely anti-immigration, as the often unregulated influx of immigrant labor, that was basically unpaid labor, proved to be against the interests of organizing domestic and primarily white workers into unions (Briggs, 2001). Similar to the discourse of intercultural education then, the primary national policy discourse of this wave across social sectors, but especially in relation to immigration and labor, was to preserve domestic social uniformity, social cohesion, and the unity of social parts that make up the idealized (though mythical), whole of US society.

The second wave of Multicultural Education, the Intergroup Education Movement of the 1940's and 1950's, was a prejudice reduction paradigm that was mostly initiated by white liberals and operated through incorporating content variables related to identity into the curriculum. This was the curricular response to racial tensions that emerged in racially diversifying cities with competitive and racially stratified labor and housing markets and manifested in what was termed, “race” riots and interracial violence. (Banks, 1993) Many of the books that were published during

this time that wrestled with identifying the root source of interracial violence came out of psychological and social psychological research traditions. (Banks, 1993)

The third wave of multiculturalism was the 1960's Civil Rights Movement during which demands ranged from inclusion to a complete restructuring of public education. As various social identity groups were struggling for social and economic equality and political participation, and in some cases the kind of complete economic and political independence that is characteristic of the Black, Chicano, Indigenous and Asian American Power movements, a paradigm for anti-racist education emerged as an answer to the problem of racism as it manifested in educational curriculum, policy and practice. Specifically, activists demanded more positions in the staffing of schools and school leadership, and the inclusion of ethnic, women's studies and bilingual education curricula, and a fair redistribution of educational spending in the interest of marginalized communities (McCarthy, 1991). The fourth wave of Multiculturalism is the Ethnic Studies/Multicultural movement, which focused on the study of single racially and ethnically defined groups through the institutionalization of ethnic studies departments and curricula. (Banks, 1993)

Though each wave has subtle differences in the way that racism was to be addressed discursively, and major changes in policy related to economics and immigration, there are similarities in each wave that are important to recognize. When it came to "official anti-racisms," in each wave, the root cause of racism was associated with attitudinal variables and ignorance. (Melamed, 2011) Racism was a result of people just not knowing any better. In each wave, the solution to racism was education

and prejudice reduction schemes in particular. The Civil Rights phase does seem to have been the most comprehensive phase, in terms of a multi-pronged strategy for addressing the problem of racism that included a strategy related to funding and the staffing of schools, however it still primarily culminated in a scheme that very much put the emphasis on education as the anti-racist strategy for society. Multicultural education was viewed as an avenue for obtaining knowledge about the cultures of people of color; providing a sort of ally training for whites; as a commitment to respecting the diversity of cultures; and an avenue for empowering people of color from within the individual and community to eventually lead to our emancipation from systems of exploitation. Socio-psychological models form the backbone of the multicultural solution.

It is for this reason, that I will argue in the rest of this paper, that whatever have been the short term gains made because of multicultural education, it simply does not, and can not, address the root problem of racism in society – racist social structures and systems that go unchecked because of the class power and privilege that they confer upon stakeholders. And in the 21st century, the stakeholders include more and more people of color.

Researchers have pointed out that educational research categorized under the umbrella term of ‘multiculturalism’ exaggerates differences between social identity groups, and particularly racial and ethnic groups, while minimizing differences within these groups (McCarthy, 1991). Multiculturalism brings with it a tendency to stereotype groups as coherent cultural units where the primary goal of anti-racism is to learn about

one another's cultural heritage. It assumes, for example, that if African American's learned more about Latino culture and heritage, and vice versa, then "good will" would play itself out and a harmonious and different but equal society would be the natural consequence. The issue of class, power, history, differences within racial groups and social interests are completely subsided.

Not only does multiculturalism tend to rely on essentialist descriptions of race and racial dynamics but there is no such thing as cultural coherence. Within races and within ethnic groups and all social identity groups, there is diversity and a multiplicity of competing interests that create intra-racial and inter-generational tension, often along the trajectory of gender and sexuality. To suggest then, that one can learn about another's culture, and know "it," is to decontextualize culture from the realm of history. In other words, while one can certainly learn about the history of racialized groups, this history in no way should be used to assign any level of predictability onto a human being, or their behavior, thoughts, dreams – the diversity of things that make them human. Further, there is no direct connection between learning about culture and enjoying equal social status or equal ability to navigate opportunity structures (McCarthy, 1991).

Friere reminds us to be careful of the naive stages of resistance where the oppressed take on the characteristics of the oppressor (Friere, 2006). In some cases, multiculturalism even allows theoretical space for the characterization of non-white racial groups as superior to white groups as a defense against the racial bigotry of theories of white supremacy. (Chapman, 2004) The problem with this logic, again, is that

no particular way of thinking or acting can be assigned to a racial group, there is diversity within groups. To argue that the system of organization that is associated with European Colonialism, US Imperialism, or Neoliberalism is less superior to the system of organization associated with other historically specific, and geographically specific systems of social organization, is correct. Still, historical specificity and material specificity, against simplicity, and informed by a critique of power and class, and not cultural or racial assumption, is what is required to move towards an anti-racist strategy.

The prevailing approaches to understanding race, racism and education in the US are limited by a black/white binary framework, are explicitly and implicitly essentialist, US centric, ahistorical, lacks attention to connections between multiple geographic locations, and lacks attention to variation within social identity groups and economic classes. (McCarthy, 1988) Further, a more complex framework that can shed some light on the contradictions created by globalization and that draws on the analytical tools offered by theories of space and spatiality, materiality, cultural geography, global ethnography and historiography may allow us to speak about identity, class and power relations in the US in ways that may be more timely and useful for educational policy research than prevailing paradigms used in US based research institutions. Such a framework may better theoretically and analytically grapple with local, national and global transformations as they impact within a single racial group and would be beneficial for the development of critical identity and class theorizing as well as the theorizing of social movements, both transnational and national. (Lugo, 2008) Finally,

such a theoretical framework would be useful as a jumping board upon which new curricula and concrete strategies towards social justice can be developed.

As the gap between rich and poor widens and power relations become more obfuscated, where even elite whites can claim 'minority status' and racial discrimination, and as boundaries and borders, both territorial and socio-cultural, become very easily traversable for some and much less so for 'others' it is critical that we re-examine the prevailing multicultural framework for looking at identity, class, power and inequality in the US and move towards methods for understanding identity, class and the human experience, that interrogate connections between multiple localities and identities and sites of power. (Melamed, 2011)

Significance of this Study

My research reconceptualizes 'culture' in educational policy research as social relations. This conceptual shift moves away from frameworks that blame the victim, directly or indirectly, with the deployment of psychological, 'inner being' models and yet do not erase the social character of exploitation and agency of individuals. Rather instead of looking inside the racialized subject for the sources of racism, my study joins with other researchers calling for the analysis of history, space and transnational geography through the deployment of ethnography and the analysis of economic, political and ideological trajectories. (Battacharya, 1998; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2003; Gilmore, 2007; Gleeson, 1999; Haraway, 1991; Harvey,

2005; Hall, 1986; Kamat, 2011; Kelley, 1994; Lipman, 2011; Lugo, 2008; Melamed, 2011; [Nayak, 2003], Spivak, 1999)

The Wave Theory approach that I describe in this study enables us to develop theoretical and analytical tools that will better capture the full – political, economic and ideological - character of racial relations in the contemporary neoliberal context. (Hall, 1986) My hope is that the assumptions and strengths of this approach will benefit students, and particularly youth and children, who I believe are the most vulnerable targets of the many branches of neoliberal policy regimes in education.

The second reason my research is significant is that it engages debates on the relationship between racism and Neoliberalism in education with reference to how both the racial supremacist and Neoliberal agendas are able to access the model minority discourse to move forward their policy regimes. To this end, my research reinterprets existing arguments about the model minority and the role that Asians, and discourses about Asians, play in the global scramble for power and capital through an analysis of educational policy research. Neoliberal education policy reform in the US is embedded in competitive processes with Asia, and China and India in particular, on the one hand, and the idealization of Chinese and Indian students to the detriment of other students of color, in US higher education in particular, on the other hand. This contradictory politics and discourse is used to justify the retreat of social welfare policies within the US on the one hand and the recruitment of lower cost, highly skilled labor from China and India on the other hand (Prashad, 2012). This model minority dialectic is also a form of fear mongering amongst people in the US that “Asians are taking over” domestic jobs

and seats within educational institutions, particularly higher education. This fear displaces the responsibility of the State towards “its” subjects, and filters it through racism onto Asians in a divide and exploitation logic. While the discourse of Neoliberalism is the discourse of democracy, inclusion and social justice, Neoliberalism, vis a vis the model minority discourse, supports policy initiatives that abandon claims for equality, freedom, access, inclusion, participation and social reorganization and support the rise of nationalist and neoliberal policy regimes both domestically and internationally.

The third reason my research is significant is that it articulates the urgency of such a project on the education of South Asians and South Asian women, not just for South Asians specifically, but for anyone who takes on the challenge of analyzing how racism, patriarchy and neoliberalization processes interact across geographic sites. The hegemony of the model minority discourse is such that differences and discontinuities within the Asian racial group fall to the wayside. This has left Asians who are not middle or upper class, or who do not fit into the model minority profile for whatever reason, falling way behind their peers in educational advancement, quality of life, and access to opportunity structures (Martinelli and Nagasawa, 1987; Cabezas & Kawaguchi, 1988; Jiobu, 1988; Hurh & Kim, 1989; Wong & Nagasawa, 1991; Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Despite this fact, research on South Asians in education, and particularly working class South Asians and South Asian children is sparse, and especially research on women and girls. Much of the research on Asians in education excludes South Asians altogether. Much of the research on South Asians is preoccupied with the

processes and models of identity formation, as if it happened in an ahistorical vacuum, and not in the context of power and labor politics. (Prashad, 2002)

The fourth reason my research is important is that it provides challenge to arguments that would trivialize the power of discourse and ideology in influencing the outcomes of situations. One must consider and theorize the material effects of discourse in the actions that transpire because of ideology.

In conclusion, my dissertation research is important because of the political significance of my 5 main objectives: to describe the current US national and international climate with respect to the relationship between education, the model minority discourse and neoliberal globalization; to typologize the educational research discourse on Asians in US education; to assess the strengths and limitations of biological, cultural-psychological and cultural-sociological discourses on race and racism in education and Asians in education in particular; to explicate the example of South Asians in US education to substantiate my theoretical assertions and critiques of the canon on education policy and race; and to present Wave theory as a useful theoretical and methodological framework for configuring and rematerializing analyses of race, education and neoliberal globalization. (Melamed, 2011)

The Chapters

My research addresses a research question and critical issue of US national concern, namely, why does racial inequality in education persist, and is in fact worsening, despite the advance of anti-racist strategies aimed towards establishing

social justice? My research contributes to ongoing efforts to address this national concern by elaborating the model minority example to deconstruct conceptual and strategic assumptions that belie prevailing anti-racist education policies and research; presenting examples that expose the contradictory outcomes of these policies; and developing an interdisciplinary, historical and spatial framework for analyzing the effectiveness of anti-racist and social justice based policies.

In the next chapter, chapter 2, I outline the methodology I used to address the research question as well as a justification for this methodology. The first part of my methodology was to complete a discourse analysis of educational policy research. The second part of my methodology was a disciplined theoretical exercise that drew on the results of the discourse analysis to assess the uses and limitations of this literature for conceptualizing and addressing contemporary trajectories of racism in light of post 1940's political, economic and ideological changes associated with neoliberal globalization. I approached the research question through a case study analysis of Asians and Asian Americans in the US.

In chapter 3, I apply the methodology to review and evaluate research literature on Asians and Asian Americans and specifically how 'model minorities' have been constructed in and by education policy research. In this chapter I provide examples of current and historical trends in approaching Asians and Asian Americans as well as examples of the biological, cultural-sociological, and cultural-psychological approaches, categories that were derived during the process of conducting the discourse analysis. My analysis of Asians and Asian Americans exposes how a concept of cultural superiority

associated with being Asian, and the racialization of Asians as middle and upper class, has abstracted anti-racism in education from its foundations in addressing material and historical inequalities. I expose how educational policy discourses about Asians further perpetuate a boot strap paradigm for establishing social justice that is based on faulty notions of education as fundamentally meritocratic. (Darder, 2012; Melamed, 2011)

In chapter 4 I present the results of my case study analysis of education policy research on South Asians and South Asian Americans in US education. The case of South Asians is presented to further deepen the exploration of the 'dematerializing' effects of anti-racism that are introduced in Chapter 3, as well as to further expose contradictions to the model minority racialization of Asians by comparing the history of South Asians immigration to the US against the educational policy research that distorts this history. This contradiction between the historical and material circumstances of our immigration juxtaposed with how this history is treated and distorted in the education policy archive demonstrates the dematerializing impact of prevailing conservative and liberal approaches in education.

The fifth chapter is my introduction of Wave Theory as a theory and method of education policy research that responds to the limitations of biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological approaches. Wave theory is crafted from interdisciplinary studies of globalization and draws on ethnographic methods, historiography, race and gender studies, analyses of space and spatiality, political geography, and theories of materiality in addition to education studies. The fifth chapter describes how we can deploy interdisciplinary 'mapping' methods to reconstruct a

dialectical and rematerializing, anti-racist strategy for education. Wave Theory is not a “new” framework, per se, nor am I necessarily invested in a competitive vying for this kind of distinction. Rather, like most contributions to the academic archives, it represents something of a ‘quilting’ or weaving together of interdisciplinary approaches and analyses that I find to be most compelling and useful for the analysis of education policy (Battacharya, 1998; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Crenshaw, 1991; Darder, 2012; Davis, 2003; Gilmore, 2007; Gleeson, 1999; Haraway, 1991; Harvey, 2005; Hall, 1986; Kamat, 2011; Kelley, 1994; Lipman, 2011; Lugo, 2008; Melamed, 2011; Spivak, 1999) The sixth and final chapter is a review of the primary arguments made in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Having discussed the significance of my research topic in chapter 1, I begin this second chapter by discussing important assumptions that underlie the methodology I've chosen to examine the research question: discourse analysis. Specifically I discuss the usefulness of discourse analysis for analyzing race and racism and educational policy research as discourse. I then review how the approach to discourse analysis was applied to the analysis of discourses about Asians and Asian Americans in Chapter 3, and discourses about South Asians and South Asian Americans in Chapter 4. I finally discuss the methodological advantages of Wave Theory, the paradigm for educational policy research that is presented in Chapter 5.

Discourse Analysis

Race is not a thing in and of itself. Ideology plays a central role in the reproduction of relations of racial dominance (Darder & Torres, 2004; Hall, 1986). For Gramsci (1992) and Voloshinov (1973) ideology isn't a substance of psychology, but is located fixedly in ideological social relations and the interpellation of subjects into discursive regimes (Gramsci, 1992; Voloshinov, 1973). Racism and the ideological supremacy of whiteness, like class domination, operate through discursive formations in addition to structural formations such as public and private policy frameworks and institutions. Power relations are – however incompletely - reproduced in these formations. Ideological analysis vis a vis discourse analysis should not replace analyses of state and economic policies and their effects, however anti- racist analysis is

legitimately historical, material, as well as ideological. The context for ideological research is the realm of discourse, representations and signs (Voloshinov, 1973).

Racism is a discursive and structural power regime that works to objectify, hierarchically order, and subjugate bodies for their integration into neoliberal capitalist relations. Patterns of uneven integration are geographically and historically specific, and operate differently at the micro and macro levels of social analysis. Where acts of racialized violence, such as the murder of Vincent Chin³, are acts of racism in the first instance; I argue that the racism exists in the first place, not because hierarchically ordering bodies is an absolute and natural inclination that characterizes the human species, but that it is an invention designed to support the dynamics of capitalism. The race struggle cannot be seen as an autonomous struggle that is not linked to class struggle, but nor can it be conflated with economic relations at every level of analysis (Hall, 1986). For this reason, it must be analyzed as part of the social workings of hegemony; there is thus legitimacy for struggling within the field of representation (Hall, 1980; Gramsci, 1992; Voloshinov, 1973). If racism is fought autonomously, outside of the context of its relationship with neoliberal globalization, it simply becomes multiculturalism – part of the new ideological discourse for capitalist accumulation under democracy (Darder & Torres, 2004; Žizek, 1997). In this dissertation then, I

³ Vincent Chin was beaten to death in metro Detroit by two autoworkers in 1982. The murder happened after Chin punched one of the autoworkers while they were all at a strip club. The autoworkers, a father and son, were seen yelling racial slurs at Chin and accusing him of being the reason why so many auto layoffs were happening in Detroit. (Yip, 1998)

approach educational research discourse as a regime of truth through which racism is exercised (Foucault, 1980).

Foucault identifies the creation of truth in contemporary western society in an historical context and with five traits: the centering of truth on scientific discourse, accountability of truth to economic and political forces, the "diffusion and consumption" of truth via societal apparatuses, the control of the distribution of truth by "political and economic apparatuses," and the fact that it is "the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation" (Foucault, 1980). Educational research then, despite claims to objectivity, is a social artifact, inherently laden with ideological forms and part and parcel of a political and economic agenda. A discourse analysis of the model minority thesis, and approaching educational policy research as ideological text and social artifact, is both a timely and necessary intervention for any anti-racist strategy that engages with the challenges of neoliberal globalization.

Approaching the educational policy research as discursive text is further consequential because of the theoretical argument that my dissertation is making – that there is a materiality of discourse and representations. Discourse analysis, and counter struggle within the realm of representation, is a critical part of any anti-racist agenda in the education sector and beyond. The way we represent our struggles and the way we allow them to be represented, the set of possibilities that discursive boundaries create and defy, are important to consider in our movement to rematerialize anti-racism in education. (Melamed, 2011; Darder, 2012)

That being said, for the specific analysis undertaken in this dissertation, I approach educational research on Asians specifically, as a discourse of racism that reflects the logic of how antiracism in education is being de-materialized. (Melamed, 2011) My dissertation project provides an example of how racism and neoliberal politics permeate education research discourse, occupy educational spaces and justify social and economic practices that include and exclude people based on their positioning in social hierarchies as delineated by race, gender, class, nation, language, etc. In this regard, I draw from the method of critical discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough. (Fairclough, 2003)

Fairclough's (2003) approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a derivative of systemic functional linguistics (SFL). As opposed to looking at language as a system in and of itself without reference to the world outside of language, SFL examines language in the context of its social use. CDA focuses on the relationship between language and social, political and economic life. A primary assumption of CDA is that texts are an instantiation of social events and, like social events, they have the power to "bring about changes in our knowledge (we can learn things from them), our beliefs, our attitudes, values and so forth." A second assumption is that CDA is a kind of ideological analysis given that texts have influence in "inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies." A third assumption of CDA is that the process of meaning making is a fundamental aspect of discourse analysis. Meaning making can be examined in various ways depending on the type of text. However, the interplay of three levels of analysis that include "the production of the text, the text itself, and the reception of the text"

allows us to understand their social effects. A fourth assumption of CDA is that the linguistic form of language, as in its grammatical and syntactic form, for example, produces meaning, which in turn produces social effects. In sum then, CDA offers a tool for analyzing the text itself as a social event, how the world is strategically and structurally represented in a text, and the social effects of textual representation (Fairclough, 2003).

I do not assert in this dissertation that discourse analysis, and the critique of texts, is by itself rematerializing anti-racism in education. To be clear, I am suggesting that the analysis of texts allows us to understand the logic by which anti-racism is being de-materialized in education and this analysis I find useful for anti-racism in two primary ways. First, it allows us to do the cultural work of re-representing anti-racism in texts, and it also allows us to strategize the material terms of anti-racism on the economic and political terrains. (Melamed, 2011)

In this dissertation project, I do not conduct the analysis of linguistic forms, such as syntactic and grammatical structures. I do conduct the kind of ideological analysis that has been popularized within education by Fairclough's methodology. In the next section I describe how I will typologize the literature using the approach to educational research as text.

Education Policy Discourses about Asians and Asian Americans in the US

Given the problem of non-specificity when it comes to using the term multiculturalism and the problem of over specificity when it comes to categorizing

research as fundamentally of critical race theory, critical race feminism or phenomenology, for example, amongst other approaches within the educational policy research, I decided to typologize the literature according to what it assumes about the nature of race and racism, and the locus of control for racism and anti-racism. (Stam & Shohat, 2005)

For this dissertation project then, I reviewed, categorized and assessed education policy research on Asians in the US from the 1940's forward. I coded for how this research accounts for racial difference across a range of education related trajectories such as achievement, identity and attrition. This research approach was largely informed by Carol Bacchi's (2009) book, *Analyzing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to Be?* In this book Bacchi (2009) guides us into uncovering how 'problems' are represented in policy texts, and what we can infer about the politics of problematization. She suggests that the way that problems are represented in policy texts largely exposes the ways that subjects are constituted by those very policy discourses. Her book is a resource that makes a strong argument for why policy texts should be treated as cultural material with the power to signify, differentiate and hierarchically order in the material realm. While analyzing the policy texts I primarily focused on trends in both conservative and liberal analytical approaches. (Darder, 2012; Bacchi, 2009)

The separation of discourses in to liberal and conservative approaches was influenced by Antonia Darder's (2012) book, *Culture and Power in the Classroom*. She argues:

conservatives, for the most part, are intent on maintaining the system as is, in that they are convinced of the rectitude of a hierarchical society, based on an appearance of meritocratic rule, while covertly conserving the economic arrangements of capitalism and the free market. Any changes should be considered very carefully and implemented very gradually, for fear of the outcome of an unruly civil society. Liberals, on the other hand, do recognize inequalities and social exclusion inherent in the system and the need for change; nevertheless, they too believe that the American capitalist system is fundamentally superior and that it can function effectively with simply a few modifications by way of compensatory programs and reform policies.

(Darder, 2012, pg.4)

I followed Freire's (2006) processes of codification and thematic breakdown and found that the conservative and liberal research on Asians fits within three broad categories: biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological approaches. It is without doubt that this typology is itself an imposition of sorts that covers over nuances and differences within and between these categories (Hall, 1980; Stam and Shohat, 2005). It is also without doubt that educational policy research that speaks back to conservative and liberal discourses is also widely available (Darder, 2012; McCarthy, 1990). My dissertation project is an attempt to join up with these researchers.

Still, I focus here on conservative and liberal research, and specifically biological, cultural psychological and cultural sociological approaches, because these discourses emerge as the overarching ideological patterns representing research and theory on

racial difference and racial inequality from the 1940's forward, particularly in the research on Asians and Asian Americans in US education.

All of these discourses, conservative and liberal, emerge within the historical trajectory of genetic theories for explaining racial difference and rely largely on the tools of positivist scientific methods. Conservative theories of the past relied on measurements of the brain (Jackson & Weidman, 2005; Linneus, 1735;). While the genetic discourse still carried weight in its original form, in response to liberal critique, it has also been filtered through the discourse of psychological differences as measured through psychometric evaluations such as IQ and memory tests. Genetic come psychological studies of Asians in education largely argue that Asians, have evolved higher mental capabilities in a process of natural selection where race is a primary indicator of intellectual differentiation (Jensen, 1969).

In contrast to conservative discourses, the liberal discourses I reviewed are strictly anti-positivist and point to cultural and sociological variables as primarily accounting for racial difference. Instead of genetic and psychometric methodologies, in most cases liberal discourses lend themselves to primarily psycho-interpretive and sociological methods for analyzing meanings, perceptions, and subjectivities. In some cases, this trend in research affirms the model minority discourse. For example, as already discussed, some discourses purport that variables associated with Asian parenting styles, cultural beliefs and values, and family structure are related to the "fact" of Asian exceptionalism in education. In other cases, the trend points to contradictions in the model minority discourse. For example, some discourses highlight

Asian student populations that are negatively impacted or silenced by the model minority discourse because the stereotype assumes that Asian students do not encounter educational related challenges because of their race despite the fact that they do.

Some liberal strands, such as phenomenology or critical race theory, also draw on psychological models to explain social behavior, however without appropriating the psychometric evaluations that distinguish the conservative camp. For example, this trend in studies includes arguments that Asians feel a sense of learned helplessness because they have to please their parents which accounts for why Asian students do much better than other students (Regin & Adams, 1990; Pang, 1991). Another trend focuses on negative psychological impacts of the model minority discourse, such as supposed Asian quietude and passiveness as a result of social pressures. Within the liberal discourses, the sociological and psychological trends can be broadly divided along the lines of the individual being the center of analysis or the cultural group/social group, conceived as a cohered racial unit. While there is enough of a trend to separate the two, let it also be said, that there is often a blurring of individual and society within the critical discourses. In the next section I discuss how I develop the case of South Asians in the US in chapter 3 to further problematize the prevailing and conservative and liberal discourses about Asians in US education.

Education Policy Discourses about South Asians and South Asian Americans in the US

In this dissertation I argue that South Asians occupy a socio-historical location in the US that radically contradicts the usefulness of biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological analytics for race in educational research. I provide examples of educational research on South Asians that also points to the necessity of a theoretical and methodological approach that better accounts for historical contradictions (Maira, 2012; Shankar, 2008; Prashad, 2012; Puar & Rai, 2004; Mathew & Prashad, 2000). I discuss the historical relationship between South Asians in education, the rise of the South Asian working class in the US, and neoliberal globalization. I describe what is at stake if biological, cultural-psychological and cultural sociological approaches to analyzing race are not dislodged and anti-racism rematerialized in education. (Melamed, 2011; Darder, 2012)

I begin chapter 3 with a history of the education of South Asians in the US. After offering a genealogy of the term 'South Asian' and discussing its historical and political significance for South Asians in the US, I outline the terms of our incorporation into US educational institutions (Morning, 2001). I narrate this history in terms of three waves, each delineated by specific historical policy directives and events as well as the integration and exclusion of South Asian intra-racial social identity and class groups into education (Prashad, 2000). I discuss the emergence of the model minority discourse as it relates to South Asians in the context of this history.

I then discuss the educational research literature written on South Asians in US education with respect to how this literature relates to biological, cultural-sociological

and cultural – psychological trends. I finally review an emergent, interdisciplinary trend in research about South Asians in education that indirectly questions the usefulness of these three prevailing frameworks and suggests that a more variegated and variegating framework is necessary to more accurately describe the contemporary social location and racial politics of South Asians in the US (Maira, 2010; Shankar, 2008).

I conclude this chapter with an explicit analysis of contradictions that the South Asian case reveals about prevailing discourses about Asians and race in education and a description of what is at stake if the prevailing discourses about South Asians and Asians in education are not challenged both discursively and institutionally. I point directly to contradictions between the history of South Asian immigration and how this history has been approached in educational policy research.

Wave Theory

Wave theory is a fundamentally feminist approach to analyzing racism in neoliberal contexts in the sense that it allows for the analysis of contradictions that occur within racial groups along the trajectory of gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, generation, etc.. It takes on an anti-essentialist view of identity, and is founded on feminist critiques of materiality and the state. In some sense it can also be viewed within the historical trajectory of feminist theories of intersectionality, however without the US nation centrism that many intersectional approaches imply, and without collapsing class and race into an identity, as opposed to a structural reality.

As methodology Wave theory incorporates both the analysis of discourse, sign, representation and ideology with the analysis of systems, governments, policies,

economics and written and unwritten politics, and considers the analysis of both of these trajectories as critical, mutually constitutive. Any one case of inquiry into racial inequality in education must contain analysis of these multiple trajectories of materiality and as such, is incomplete without a critical analysis of women's social positioning and gendered claims to normativity.

Wave theory is an ethnographic method for doing education policy research on racial inequality (Burawoy et al, 2000; Gupta and Ferguson, 1992; Haraway, 1991; Lugo, 2008) Wave Theory relies on those ethnographic methods that map the relationship between the local and the global, the micro and the macro, the historical and contemporary, and in a multi-sited approach to ethnography, as opposed to approaches bound within traditional conceptions of time, space, place and territory. The strength of this method is that it allows us to look at the everyday experience and subjective experience of neoliberal globalization and race, giving the analysis a human face, as opposed to fixing analyses in the realm of abstraction. Further it allows us to describe neoliberal globalization as a non-neutral embodiment of forces, as connections between localities, and as cultural imaginations that are bound up in multilayered structural and systemic processes as they articulate with the local and within the realm of subjectivity (Burawoy et al, 2000). Wave theory as ethnography offers a complex analytics of neoliberal globalization and racism with the benefits of ethnography that allows one to understand processes from the perspective of people living the interstices of globalization and as dynamic as opposed to static and bounded.

Wave Theory is an historical approach to the analysis of race, racism and processes of racialization. It relies on bottom up histories drawn through the ethnographic method and then analyzed through the lens of an evaluation of neoliberal governmentality (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002). Under neoliberal globalization, relations within and between nation states shift towards vertical reterritorialization, we see the rise and variability of context dependent flexible accumulation regimes along with increasing autonomy of capital from labor vis a vis finance capitalism, and internal regulation/self governing in the interest of Neoliberalism, we see path dependent flexible sexism and flexible racism, and stretching and collapsing time, space and scale relations (Brenner, 1999; Harvey, 1990; Tsing, 2005).

In Wave Theory as method, Foucault's theory of governmentality is used to historicize and map this global order while conceptually grasping and moving away from nation state bound and territorially bounded understanding of space and place that are characteristic of traditional approaches to ethnographic research and historiography. At the same time this lens does not require that we move away from the analytics of the nation state as an organizational framework with multiple levels of accountability for inequality. I argue that the state, and the US State in particular, because of its role as an imperial power, remains a critical, legislative framework that is able to mediate the terms and direction of globalization and capital (Kamat, 2011). Wave Theory allows us to speak in more specific terms about the functions of contemporary states and about where accountability lies for the promulgation of racial inequality in specific terms, be it in the operation of multinational corporations, the district, the local "communities"

and/or individuals that allow racism, patriarchy and exploitation to continue for their own benefit, whether intentionally or unintentionally. In this way, Wave Theory conceptualizes racism as an historical problem with variable geographic saliency and organization. It does not analyze racism as an omnipresent characteristic of societies and spaces, as in the biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological analyses, and yet, does not deny that white supremacy is actually strengthening in its role as a force that fundamentally structures inequality. (Melamed, 2011) The task then, is to use the analytics of neoliberal governmentality as a descriptive tool to analyze how power operates in an historical trajectory and then to map who is to be held accountable for reversing unequal racial relations in education.

Wave theory also draws on theories of space and spatiality (Appadurai, 1990; Castells, 1989, 1996; Urry, 2000; Sassen, 2000; Brenner, 1999; Lipman, 2011). Wave theory uses the analysis of discourse to identify how discourses about race are used to justify the inclusion and exclusion of racialized subjects from educational space, and how these processes of inclusion and exclusion produce and perpetuate patterns of inequality. Wave theory also looks at the educational relevance of the appropriation and racialization of urban spaces in times of globalization. As a theory of resistance, Wave Theory maps contradictions that occur in “places,” despite the way they are ideologically represented in and as educational and urban “spaces” as such.

Finally Wave Theory draws on the analysis of political and cultural geography (Massey, 1994; Hall, 1991, 1991; Grewel and Kaplan, 1994; Sahlins, 1993; Wilk, 1995; Brenner, 2002, 2010; Wilson, D., 2007; Lipman, 2011; Kamat, 2011). My position is that

globalization does not create a communitarian, multicultural, global village, nor does it collapse or homogenize identity or power relations. Race, class and gender inequality, the inequality exercised through difference by the state, the range of hierarchically organized social actors, and individuals, is only exacerbated and hierarchically ordered under new and often times counterintuitive logics that are difficult to grasp if our way of seeing or theorizing social relations relies on racial absolutism. Approaches that stem from studies on political and cultural geography in education allow us to map the re-territorialization of state power and transnational networks of racial inequality and resistance.

Conclusion

In sum, I choose to explore my research question about the persistence of racial inequality in US education, despite the advance of anti-racism in education, using methods of discourse analysis. I explored this research question through an analysis of the model minority question in education, and specifically, the racialization of Asians in US education. The discourse analysis allowed me to uncover assumptions that were underlying anti-racist efforts, that exposed how the failure of policy is largely based on the faulty assumptions they make about race and racism and how these assumptions distort the historical and material conditions of our lives in the US. In the next chapter I historicize the model minority politic and present the results of my discourse analysis of education policy research on Asians in US education.

CHAPTER 3

THE MODEL MINORITY

*Starin at their pictures, I'm pickin up my pen
I envision the struggles that my parents landed in
Prisons that held them in, cultures they didn't understand
But they fought to make a home and assimilated in
Didn't always know the words, but the dream was clear
In a land of freedom, they made a family here
It wasn't always easy but they persevered
And by the day I appeared, they had worked for years
Pain, struggle, and tears, storms finally made clear
Because my generation grew up without fear
Of wars and conflicts tearing homes apart
But now it's our turn to step up and take part
School boards and printers, they approved the choice
Of textbooks in which their stories have no voice
Thank you for fightin so that I was raised up
Now I'm gonna speak up and raise your names up
And I think it's messed up, you're Americans too
Everyone immigrated just like you, too
It's not fair the way that my parents are viewed
Now I'm fighting so you don't vanish into the blue, singin
Where'd you go?
I miss you so
Seems like its been forever
That you've been gone
-Grand Master Chu*

In this chapter I describe what I found when I applied the methodology described in chapter 2 to the analysis of education policy research on Asians and Asian Americans in the US. I begin by describing a brief history of the emergence of the model minority thesis. In the next section I describe the analysis. I found that the educational policy research was best categorized into three types: biological, cultural - psychological and cultural- sociological approaches. I further categorized research as conservative and liberal approaches, which I found was an appropriate delineation after the initial

discourse analysis was completed⁴. (Darder, 2012) I ultimately argue that the conservative and liberal approaches enable the exploitation and oppression of people of color, including Asians and Asian Americans, despite claims towards the advancement of anti-racist strategy in education.

Following Jodi Melamed, I argue that anti-racist policy research in education can rematerialize anti-racism with a theoretical and methodological approach that draws critical links between the project of white supremacy in the US and the project of white, masculine, US, nationalist neoliberal globalization that threatens the lives of all people and humanity itself. (Melamed, 2011) To be clear, there are two prevailing definitions of the model minority thesis as it is used in the US. The first locates the thesis within the political project of white supremacy in the US for which the US Civil Rights movement was a response. The second locates it within the project of white, US nationalist, neoliberal globalization, for which the Black, Chicano, Native and Asian American Power movements were a response. (Ogbar, 2001, pg. 29) I develop the model minority example, to argue that the analytics of white supremacy in terms of civil rights and democratic citizenship offers, at best, a partial description of the dynamics of racism and that white supremacy as a US and global phenomenon, far from over, must be analyzed in terms of processes of enraced, and engendered processes of US nationalist Neoliberal globalization. (Melamed, 2011)

⁴ Research on Asians and Asian American radicalism in the US is available, such as Ogbar's (2001) review of *Yellow Power*. Unfortunately these approaches are not mainstream. My research focuses specifically on mainstream trends in the literature that largely span the conservative and liberal approaches as described in Darder (2012).

Model Minority Politics

The model minority thesis is the prevailing cultural assertion about Asians in the US and is often cited to explain the relative social and economic advancement of Asians compared to other non-white racialized groups. If so many Asians can excel despite a history of colonialism and racism, the thesis suggests, then anyone can do it too. (Prashad, 2002) The model minority thesis is based on the assumption that Asians, conceived as a uniform cultural unit and contrasted with other US non white racial groups, have evolved a relatively superior cultural value, familial, and belief system as well as a superior work ethic which allows for social and economic advancement despite any obstacles related to historical and contemporary injustice. (Prashad, 2002) The model minority thesis however, both appears and disappears at various points in US national history. For example, consider the following contradictory sequence of headlines found in the US popular press:

“The Yellow Peril” (Los Angeles Times, 1886)

“Conference Endorses Chinese Exclusion” (The New York Times, 1905)

“The Tide of Turbans” (Forum, 1910)

“The Perils of Immigration Impose on Congress a New Issue: The Hindoo Invasion – a new peril” (Current Opinion, 1914)

“Success Story: Japanese American Style” (The New York Times magazine, 1966)

“Success Story of One Minority in the US,” (US News and World Report, 1966)

“Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites,” (Newsweek, 1971)

“Asian Americans: A Model Minority” (Newsweek, 1978)

“America’s Asians: The Glass Ceiling” (The Economist, 1989)

“The Model Students” (The New York Times, 2006)

“Why Do Asians Get Higher Marks than Latinos?” (Los Angeles Times, 2008)

“Indian Americans: The New Model Minority” (Forbes, 2009)

So how did we get from ‘Yellow Peril’ and ‘Hindoo Invasion’ to valorizing US Asians as a model minority?

Proposing a ‘dialectic’ of the model minority and the yellow peril, Okihiro (1994) denies the usefulness of considering this question within a linear historical trajectory, as a sequential reading of the headlines above would suggest:

It seems to me that the yellow peril and the model minority are not poles, denoting opposite representations along a single line, but in fact form a circular relationship that moves in either direction. We might see them as engendered images: the yellow peril denoting a masculine threat of military and sexual conquest, and the model minority symbolizing a feminized position of passivity and malleability. Moving in one direction along the circle, the model minority mitigates the alleged danger of the yellow peril, whereas reversing direction, the model minority, if taken too far, can become the yellow peril. In either swing along the arc, white supremacy is maintained and justified through feminization in one direction and repression in the other. (Okihiro, 1994, p. 142)

Kawai (2005) historically and spatially contextualizes Okihiro’s (1994) dialectic to argue that “both local and global contexts have influenced the production of the yellow

peril and the model minority stereotypes...(and) the revival of both stereotypes in the 1980's coincided with the rise of Asian economic powers and also the Reagan administrations' attack on affirmative action programs that were indebted to the Civil Rights movement" (Kawai, 2005, p. 126). Likewise, Kawai (2005) argues that Asians have been historically socially constructed as a "foreign" threat in response to the rise of tiger economies, but as inherently and culturally superior when it comes to other non-white minorities in the US in response to arguments in support of affirmative action strategies.

The yellow peril and model minority dialectic then, is the ideological trajectory that cannot be disconnected from the economic and political imperative that the dialectic serves: to rationalize US economic, political, ideological and military expansionism and to rationalize a retreat from the US welfare state system and specifically social subsidy programs and redistributive funding schemas in that were initiated to redress the historical repression and exploitation of people of color in the US. (Kawai, 2005)

To conceptualize the racialization of Asians within the analytics of white supremacy as Okihiro (1994) has is certainly justified given the history of colonialism continuing on to many contemporary cases of social injustice and racial motivated violence. For example, consider the murder of Vincent Chin and post 9/11 profiling and killings of people racialized as a Muslim or Arab. (Prashad, 2012; Yip, 1998) These are examples of racist ruthlessness and violence and the desire for racial subjugation on the part of the attackers, in the first analysis.

Still, the white supremacy and racial supremacy framework doesn't capture the full range of the workings of racism, from the exploitation of the labor of colonial subject to expand the empire to the incorporation of new patterns of racialization, villainization and state and corporate sponsored regimes of violence that are emerging in a post 9/11 world. (Lugo, 2008; Melamed, 2012) These new forms of racism deploy the discourse of social justice, democracy and even anti-racism on the one hand, while simultaneously furthering hierarchical forms of inequality in the interest of neoliberal globalization on the other. (Melamed, 2011)

Following Kawai (2005) and Brenner (2010), I develop the case of the model minority to argue that a complete analysis of racism and social justice must also map transnational 'processes of neoliberalisation' as the structural and systemic foundation upon which white supremacy vis a vis the model minority dialectic has taken root. (Kawai, 2005; Brenner, 2010) As in the case of white supremacy, Neoliberal globalization deploys the discourse and politics of the model minority and Asian peril in effort to rationalize the exploitation of racialized labor. The project of Neoliberalism, as an anti-welfare state project, accesses the model minority discourse to rationalize the retreat of welfare programs by deploying discourses of cultural superiority and meritocracy which construct the overwhelmingly non-white poor as bringing victimization and disposability upon oneself. This moral responsibility is rationalized based on the simple question: if Asians can do it, why can't you? (Prashad, 2002)

So while white supremacy and Neoliberalism can be theorized and mapped as autonomous projects because they have their own locally situated manifestations and

trajectories, both the project of white supremacy and the project of Neoliberalism articulate with the model minority discourse and politic. (Prashad, 2012) The model minority politic then, reveals how white supremacy and Neoliberalism are critically binded projects where any material analysis of race and racism and strategy for social justice must not exclude an analysis of 'processes of neoliberalization.' (Brenner, Peck, Theodore, 2010) To be sure, this is not a simplistic argument for "class over race" or economic reductionism, indeed the analysis of racism should not be conflated with economics, despite their relationship. (Darder, 2012) In fact I argue that in the contemporary context, with the so -called rise of China and India and selective immigration policies that favor students from these countries, the model minority discourse is being actualized as a powerful ideological trajectory upon which the rationalizing of violence and the exploitation of labor occurs. Education is a key site for the reproduction of model minority politics.

Even in 2013, the colonial imagination about people of color continues to penetrate educational policy discourses come outcomes. However, in the context of neoliberal globalization, whiteness and blackness have been abstracted from bodies such that even whites, and particularly poor whites, find themselves racialized and punished as 'acting black,' and people of color, such as upwardly mobile model minorities, are racialized as 'honorary whites' or as 'acting white.' This is while, at the same time still benefitting from white privilege, or not benefitting from it, respectively. One of the central arguments the model minority politic reveals is that, in the context of neoliberal globalization, racial signification and the ability to racialize, differentiate,

hierarchically order, abuse and exploit is being actualized, even while, in multicultural societies like the US particular, racial signification is being freed from the chains of skin color and incorporated into the logics of capitalist accumulation regimes. (Melamed, 2011) Racism, like sexism, is an ideological and material thickness that impacts our lives in the most profound and fundamental ways, yet its impact across social sectors and spaces is increasingly made invisible particularly within the context of neoliberal globalization.

Consider, for example, the prevalence of ‘color blind’ and ‘race neutral’ research that argues that the relationship between family structure, family values, parenting and community “culture” is the primary determinant of educational outcomes. (Dayton, 2012) While it is true the family relationships can encourage or discourage educational outcomes, acting as a form of cultural and social capital for students, these discourses find congruence with the racialized model minority discourse without making any reference to race at all. Like the model minority discourse, this research offers a transcendent narrative about culture, in this variant family culture, abstracting the psychological and sociological determinants of educational outcomes from their grounding in structural phenomena related to the allocation of resources and capital within social spaces. The question that remains is what accounts for differences between families? Whose families are criminalized and punished for having ‘bad family values’ or for not valuing education. The answer is always working class families of color. Colonial discourses about the supposed cultural inferiority and lack of moral structure governing people of color cover over the reality that working class families of color

increasingly face insurmountable struggles in a neoliberal capitalist system that deploys the logics of colonialism and patriarchy to legitimize processes of exploitation on the one hand, and blame those very same families of color for their suffering on the other hand. In this context, education is at best an institution that exists to legitimize the colonial and patriarchal logics of neoliberal capitalism that are entrenched in a discourse of 'meritocracy,' and at worst education is simply a cog in the pipeline that makes more expedient the process of birth to early death for working class and poor people, and particularly people of color.

If we are to meet these new forms of violence that are taking shape in education with strategies for social justice that are built upon dialectical theories of racism and white supremacy, which allow us to abstract race and racism from processes of neoliberal globalization, then we will simply be creating new ground upon which the project of a racism and white supremacy can take root, for example through this kind of 'color-blind' and 'race-neutral' and thus 'class neutral' and 'gender neutral' research on family and education. This is why it is so critically important to rematerialize anti-racism in education through a sustained linking of race analysis with class and gender analysis and an analysis of the neoliberal and so called democratic State form. (Melamed, 2011; Kamat, 2022; Darder, 2012)

In this chapter I discuss the example of model minority politics in educational research on Asians and Asian Americans to demonstrate the key role that the model minority discourse plays in binding the project and analytics of white supremacy with the project of neoliberal globalization and thus explain why racial inequality persists

despite the advance of anti-racism and multicultural solutions in education. This chapter is the product of an extensive review of educational research on Asians in the US from the 1940's forward. While the primary aim of much of the reviewed literature is to inform policy and educational practices, I took the discourse analysis methodology described in chapter 2, treated the literature as a performative text with material implications across the institution of education, and analyzed it as discourses about race. (Bacchi, 2009; Fairclough, 2003) Such an approach is warranted because discourses found within educational research play a pivotal role in the conceptualization of race and racism and material production of educational policies and strategies.

In my research I found that US educational policy discourses about Asians wrestle with one fundamental question and assumption: Why do Asian students outperform other non-white students in a variety of educational outcomes measurements? I found that the research is best categorized into three overarching groups: biological, cultural-psychological and cultural-sociological theories. There are overlapping tendencies between these three approaches and nuanced differences between analytical strands within each approach. I will address these tensions in more detail. Still the three approaches tend to represent major discursive blocs within the literature. As I discuss each group, I focus my comments here on two trends. First I review the conservative 'colorblind' and 'race neutral' arguments. Then I discuss the liberal arguments that are largely intended to challenge colorblind racism in education, but effectively end up perpetuating it by sidelining the analytics of Neoliberalism.

I argue that those critical analytics which position the analysis of racism solely within the dynamics of a white, male, supremacy framework that is disconnected from an analysis of neoliberal globalization, fall tragically short of mapping its full trajectory and effectively de-materialize anti-racist efforts for social justice in much the same way that colorblind educational policies dematerialize. (Melamed, 2011) I argue that the project of white supremacy, still very much thriving, is critically binded with the project of neoliberal globalization vis a vis the model minority politic, despite the fact that each trajectory has very specific, contradictory and non-reductive spatial dynamics. I further argue that educational policy research on Asians, and on race and racism broadly speaking, must re-materialize the concept of race and the reality of racism by linking its analysis in educational contexts to the multilayered and contradictory spatial dynamics of neoliberal globalization (Melamed, 2011).

Throughout the colonial history of the US different racial groups, and class, gender, religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups within racial groups have been racialized as model minorities. Still, because the model minority discourse is so often applied to Asian bodies, and Asians are not popularly considered people of color because of the model minority image, this powerful ideological strategy for understanding the evolution of racism – and materially structuring it - has gone largely under the radar. Here, I choose to focus specifically on the racialization of Asians and Asian Americans, not simply because I am a second generation Indian myself, or because Asians are the only group racialized as model minority, but because this history of the model minority

discourse in particular has had a far-reaching impact on contemporary educational policies and research as well as race theorizing.

Historicizing the Model Minority Thesis

The so-called “model minority” Asians were actually deficient and undesirable minorities at other points in time. Prior to 1965, discourses of Asian deficiency, danger and clannishness accompanied a series of laws and federal legal cases intended to exclude Asians from having equality with whites and further enable the exploitation of Asian labor. These negative characterizations of Asians largely changed after four significant US policy events that shaped the movement of transnational labor: the end of the Bracero Program, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the US Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the Social Security Act of 1965. Beginning in 1942, the Bracero program brought 4.5 million low-wage workers to the US from primarily Mexico to fill manual and agricultural labor jobs for domestic economic expansion. The program was formally ended 4 years later but continued under various policies and legal stipulations until the Civil Rights Act and the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) were passed. US immigration policy then largely replaced Bracero labor with the Asian science and technology labor vis a vis the INA. From the imperial outlook, this was a necessary step as the country entered a global scramble for technological power. (Takaki, 1999; Prashad, 2002)

During this time of rapid immigration of high tech Asians, the model minority thesis, as it has been applied to Asians in the more recent waves of immigration was

born. Asians were socially constructed as better and more valuable workers than African Americans, Mexicans and other non-white racialized groups that occupied the largest segments of the working class and poor US labor market because of their allegedly superior values and culture. (Kawai, 2005) As demands were made of the state on behalf of the US Black Power movement, Chicano Movement, Indigenous Rights movement, Asian American movement, and Women's rights movement, Asians were pitted against these groups as a superior minority in order to legitimize the political and private interests of the state and its contractors and to reject domestic claims for democratic inclusion and redistribution.

More specifically, as the social activists of the 1960's began to argue that desegregation, multicultural education, promises of equal opportunity and social welfarism were not working to repair hundreds of years of political, economic and social repression and exploitation, and that structural and institutional changes such as the redistribution of wealth, resources and property were necessary for equalizing opportunity structures for people of color, and particularly the working class and poor segments of those populations, Asians were racialized in the popular media and educational discourses as a monolithic example of success based on individual effort and cultural idealization. (McCarthy, 1991; Lee, 2005) Racialized as a model minority, Asians were mobilized by the State and liberal institutions including popular culture against these radical social movements.

The Social Security Act of 1965 was also passed at this time enabling medical workers from Asia to immigrate and introducing Medicare and Medicaid. These

programs allowed private companies to have contracts with the US state. There was literally a huge investment on the part of state and big business for making sure high tech Asian labor replaced other labor. (Prashad, 2012) This wave of Asian immigrants, in contrast to their poor and working class domestic counterparts, were highly skilled and more easily exploitable in the racist US labor and political context. The majority were skilled workers and students from China, India and Korea, occupying class, caste, religious, linguistic and ethnic privilege in their home countries, and who were able to apply for naturalization and find some modicum of success vis a vis their relative social and economic class status in comparison to other racial minorities within the structures of the United States.

The rise of China and India, the perception and reality of Asian countries as a threat to US national labor, economic and political interests, the events of 9/11, and the War on Terror are a few of the major contemporary political events causing new tensions both within the Asian racial group and between Asians and other racial groups. (Prashad, 2012; Puar & Raj, 2004) Instances of violence and hate crimes against Asians are skyrocketing. Asians are struggling to retain the privileges accorded to model minorities as a form of protection against newly emerging forms of violence and profiling associated with changing race, national, class, religious, linguistic, gender and ethnic formations. In the contemporary racial climate, it is particularly the working class and poor Asians, and those who are racialized as Muslims and terrorists, who are faring worst. (Prashad, 2012)

Despite these historical events that most profoundly impact the education of Asians in the US, it is still the realm of culture – often to the exclusion of political and economic structures - which is given primary accord as a determinant of outcomes. This is largely a continuation of the culture of poverty arguments that dominated educational, economic and social policy discourse (Lewis, 1959, 1961; Moynihan, 1965). The argument, most popularly advanced by anthropologist Oscar Lewis in *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (1959) and *The Children of Sanchez: Autobiography of A Mexican Family* (1961), was that some groups of people living in poverty have a set of values that renders them pacifists to their own cause and unable to succeed (Lewis 1959, 1961). In this context, the model minority myth emerged to position Asians as an example of meritocratic achievement and superior cultural values, against blacks and other non-white racialized groups who were, presumably, reproducing their own socially subordinate position. For example, the Moynihan report (1965) on the education of blacks in the US reads:

There is one unmistakable lesson in American history, a community that allows a large number of men to grow up in broken families, dominated by women, never acquiring any stable relationship to male authority, never acquiring rational expectations about the future — that community asks for and gets chaos....the center of the tangle of pathology was the weakness of the family structure.

(Moynihan, 1965, p. 30)

In *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, Mahmood Mamdani (2004) argues that the distinction is actually a political distinction, despite the Clash of Civilizations logic. The

‘bad’ Muslims happen to be whichever Muslims are resisting US hegemony where the ‘good’ Muslims happen to be whichever Muslims are apologists for the empire. Similarly, a model minority is a minority that is culturally described as Western, an undesirable minority is a minority who is described as lacking moral values and culturally unable to move forward and succeed. However, when one historically shifts from being characterized as a model minority to undesirable minority, as Asians so often have throughout US history, it isn’t because of a cultural shift. Rather the shift in racialization occurs when different groups among Asians begin to resist racial Neoliberalism in the US. (Mamdani, 2004) Despite this, educational research continues to deploy the model minority thesis to characterize Asians. Now, let us turn to an examination of these research trends. In what follows I present a review of the conservative and liberal discourses associated with Asians in the educational research. (Darder, 2012)

Biological Policy Discourses about Asians in Education

Biological theories about a supposed Asian intellectual superiority simply have not declined, or been taken less seriously over time. Nor have these theories just remained hidden in the minds of people who have submitted a quiet acquiescence to “political correctness.” In the 21st century, scientific racism is still loud and proud. High rank leaders around the world have suggested that Asian economies have experienced dramatic and rapid growth because of genetic based abilities that distinguish Asian racial and ethnic groups (Sautman, 1996). Biological theories of the past relied on

measurements of the brain (Jackson & Weidman, 2005; Linneus, 1735). But in more recent reproductions of scientific racism, educational researchers deploy psychometric evaluations related to memory and IQ to argue that Asians, and even more often East Asians, have evolved higher mental capabilities in a process of natural selection where race is a primary indicator of differentiation (Jensen, 1969) Biological theories about Asian mental superiority give the illusion of scientific objectivity and play a crucial role as the foundation upon which cultural theories emerge. (Darder, 2012; McCarthy et al., 1997).

The basic assumption that has carried over through the centuries regarding intelligence is that it can be measured using scientific techniques and that it is, indeed, a genetic phenomenon regardless of the influence of environmental factors. In the genetic argument, environmental factors simply change genetic factors over time. The early strands of genetic theories about intelligence focused on methods of taxonomy (Linnaeus, 1735). Measurements of the cranium and bone structure as well as physical description were not differentiated from subjective descriptions of racial tendencies and attitudes. In *General System of Nature* (1735) by Linneus, for example, male Asians, or Asiaticus, were described as "yellowish, melancholy, endowed with black hair and brown eyes...severe, conceited, and stingy. He puts on loose clothing. He is governed by opinion." (Hossain, 2008) These kinds of studies, philosophically and materially rooted in the project of empire, set the stage for the latter US national, as well as global, Eugenics movements. And Eugenics is a precursor for the current trend in educational research related to IQ.

Eugenics is the movement for selective reproduction based on “scientific” assessments of superior genetic makeup. Basically the idea is that people who have superior genes should strictly mate with each other, and that mating practices in general should not be encouraged between carriers of inferior gene types. Eugenics argues that the white race, classifiable as a coherent unit, has the most desirable genetic material with non- white racialized people filing in below whites. The darker you are, the more inferior you become in the hierarchy. In the US and around the world Eugenics has also applied to male and female, where different social, economic and political demands inform discourses about what is and is not desirable in genetic terms. Most often, however, sons are the prized possession and the whiter the better. Eugenics has also led to policy orientations against the “breeding” of mixed races and gender and race based selective abortion policies and practices.

While the basic premise remained the same, after WWII, Eugenics in education was replaced with IQ studies and Asians took a leading position in the race to intellectual top. As high tech Asian labor became desirable, IQ and standardized tests emerged through the post war period and even until now, that “proved” that Asians are a desirable immigrant minority group with a genetic predisposition that distinguishes Asians from other non-white racialized groups.

Cultural – Sociological Policy Discourses about Asians in Education

Conservative cultural-sociological approaches in education racialize Asians as a largely monolithic group that is, in an exceeding number of cases, excelling in education.

These approaches are not colorblind in the sense that they do not recognize racial difference, they are colorblind in the sense that they co-articulate with colorblind arguments about culture being a primary determinant of educational outcomes. The emphasis on sociological variables tends towards explanations that suggest the reasons Asians are supposedly excelling in such great numbers are strong attachment to national cultures and communal values; law abidingness; no exposure and/or the ability to resist social pressures related to drugs, alcohol, and sex; moral adherence to conservative norms regarding gender and sexual roles; two parent families where, if interracial, both parents reproduce an abstracted conceptualization of middle class, white, Christian, normativity; and the list goes on. (Sautman, 1996)

For example, studies that set the stage for the emergence and social rooting of the thesis in the 1960's emphasize cultural variables that were supposedly transplanted to the US from the motherland as primarily accounting for the success of Asians. (Caudill & Devos, 1956) These writers were taking a liberal approach to speaking back to those researchers who used genetic theories to make arguments about intellectual superiority and inferiority in the decades before. Their studies focused mainly on Japanese and Chinese migrants and argued that they have a culture that positions them for success and that, if genetic data was not to be done away with altogether, data about culture should at least be used in conjunction with genetic data (Caudill & Devos, 1956).

Some of these studies argued that Asian culture was the same as US middle class culture, thus explaining the wave of Asian success. (Caudill & DeVos, 1956; Levine & Montero, 1975; Light, 1972) These writers argued that Asian cultures valued individual

liberties and a set of principles based on reaping the benefits of a hard days' work and this was, presumably, what characterized US middle class culture as well. Other early researchers argued that Asians, and particularly Chinese and Japanese, had a culture of collectivism that was very distinct from what was found in the US, but still compatible with US middle class values based on individual effort, hard work, values, etc. (Tong, 1971) This kind of analysis made room for social, historical and cultural variation, but only to the extent that it was deemed to be a variant of an idealized and abstracted notion of white, US, middle class values. For example, one researcher on Chinese education emphasized a particular form of Chinese perseverance in spite of obstacles and argues that Chinese were not aggressive like other minorities but were neither servile (Sung, 1967). A researcher on Japanese argued that Japanese pulled themselves up by their bootstraps despite challenges associated with language, education, race and class and that the Japanese had a "strong protective and self-supporting subculture... based on prefectural groups in Japan and Japanese tradition of highly organized group oriented behavior." This writer identified "Japanese characteristics" of "conformity, self control, respect for authority, minimized clashes with the majority group, a habit of hard work, thriftiness, and the special Japanese virtue of sticking it out against difficulties" (Kitano, 1969, p.29). Peterson (1971), the man widely credited with first writing about Asians as a model minority in education, argued that for other groups discrimination has led to apathy and self-destructive behavior. In his analysis, the Japanese are exceptional because Japanese values from Meiji era are compatible with American values of hard work, respect, and collective advancement, etc. (Peterson, 1971)

Either way you look at it, whether one argues that Asians have a distinct culture based on forms of collectivism that presumably come from the motherland (i.e. Confucianism, Meiji Restoration, etc.), or that Asians have the same US, middle class values of individual liberties that presumably characterizes the US – the way to success within the cultural - sociological paradigm is based on the myth of educational meritocracy and triumph of whiteness and individualism (Wing, 2007) This kind of an analysis assigns an idealized and normative status to US whiteness and positions all non white racialized people as valuable only in relation to how they can be used as tokens to maintain white supremacy on the one hand, and neoliberal globalization on the other hand, particularly when considering the material benefits that are paid out to elite and middle class whites and Asians within the context of neoliberal globalization.

As an extension of commentary on Asian culture and collective behavior, the focus of education research on Asians in the 1980's and 1990's was the exceptionalism of the Asian family, and Asian parenting in particular (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Mau, 1997; Cheng and Yang, 2000). O'Reilly, Tokuno, and Abata (1986) brought back the cultural origins research but to argue that Japanese parenting is influenced by collective Japanese homeland culture. In an article published in *Time* called "The New Whiz Kid," Brand (1987) argued that Asians are model minority students because Asian parents spend more time with their children than US parents, have a powerful belief in the value of hard work, and believe in taking advantage of opportunities in the US. He argued: "If assimilation and other trends mean that the dramatic concentration of super students has peaked, talented young Asian Americans have already shown that U.S. education

can still produce excellence. The largely successful Asian-American experience is a challenging counterpoint to the charges that U.S. schools are now producing less-educated mainstream students and failing to help underclass blacks and Hispanics.”

(Brand, 1987) Jiobu (1988) makes a similar attack when he argues that Japanese culture and family structure is the reason why Japanese are not in “welfare roles and police blotters.” (Jiobu, 1988, pg.6)

Other discourses within the cultural sociological camp acknowledge racism, but even amongst these writers there is a propensity to lean more towards characterizing Asians eventual success as a result of their hard efforts for upward mobility in an ultimately meritocratic US system (Sue & Okazaki,1990). Kitano (1981) acknowledges racism but argues that Asians were able to overcome it because of their superior family structure and hard work. (Kitano, 1981) Hirschman and Wong (1981, 1986) acknowledge racist structures and policies, but only in order to enhance their promotion of Asian exceptionalism. For example, they argued that because of structural barriers to their advancement, Asians organically evolved a cultural orientation that primed them for success in the US. This orientation was rooted in the motivation for upward mobility, the ability to defer gratification, limit consumption and obtain self-reliance, and that all of these were characteristic for Asian culture. (Hirschman and Wong, 1981, 1986) Sue and Okazaki (1990) argue that when other avenues are blocked, Asians used the education avenue to move forward. They thereby acknowledged some racism in American history, as blocked avenues. At the same time they argue that Asians have a cultural disposition

that tends towards academic achievement that allows them to overcome the blocks.

(Okasaki, 1990)

John Ogbu strongly influenced the cultural – sociological discourse on the model minority thesis. Like others, he acknowledged racism but persistently argued that it is primarily cultural and social variables that account for differences in minority student outcomes (Ogbu, 1987). For example, in a study on children he found that a child's environment and cultural ecology, and specifically their child rearing in the family and similar micro sociological settings is correlated to their social, economic and general personal success as an adult. It was his cultural-ecological theory of minority student success and categorization of different migrant groups that carried forward into research on education and became problematic in its application as a theory that legitimized blaming working class people of color for educational failure.

His cultural-ecological theory of minority student success is based on an analysis and delineation of three minority groups: autonomous; voluntary/immigrant; and caste like/involuntary/subordinate. Autonomous minorities are those who are minorities in a numerical sense, but who are not largely subjected to a marginalized social status (Ogbu, 1987). Voluntary minorities are those who exercise choice to migrate voluntarily such as Asians while involuntary minorities came to the US against their will such as African Americans with US slave ancestry.

Ogbu (1987) argued that voluntary minorities are higher achievers than involuntary minorities because of the latter groups "oppositional approach" to US institutions and the former groups "instrumental approach". The oppositional approach

is a consequence of an historical and socio-cultural accumulation of distrust and contempt due to the persistent and institutional subordination of Indigenous Americans, African Americans and other groups since the onset of European colonialism in the Americas. The instrumental approach is a byproduct of immigrant rationalization processes that posit that the opportunities available in the US are ideal compared to opportunities in the home country. Whether one took an oppositional approach or an instrumental approach, Ogbu argued that people made the choice to succeed or not to succeed. This discourse of choice and individualism is a key component of the kind of neoliberal discourse that characterized education well into the 80's and 90's.

Ogbu's analysis shows convergence with cultural deficit explanations for student failure and success that lie on a historical continuum with genetic explanations for educational disparities; where whites mental capacity is inherently superior to non-whites, and in this case, model minorities are positioned as whites without the privileges of whiteness. Research on Mexican and Vietnamese families has pointed to the success of voluntary and involuntary minorities within the same families. These researchers argue that Ogbu's framework does not account for within group differences and that the school environment has different effects on different students and that students exercise agency in diverse ways (Hayes, 1992; Conchas and Perez, 2003). Other scholars have also pointed to instances of involuntary minority student success and have shown that gender, class, and ethnicity complicate and narrow the applicability of Ogbu's formulation to an analysis of diverse and stratified groups of racial minorities. Still others have pointed to the outright inaccuracies of Ogbu's project, both in terms of

his data and historical analysis (Foster, 2005; Lew, 2006). Still, after Ogbu, the discourse of choice would endure in replacing the preceding discourse of culture to explain the proportionate successes of Asians relative to blacks. The argument, in simple terms, is that Asians have a better attitude than US blacks and other non-white racialized groups that accounts for their academic achievement. Ogbu's cultural ecological theory had a profound impact on subsequent research about racial differences in educational attainment.

In Signithia Fordham's (1986) work, for example, on the reasons why African American students specifically experience disproportionate 'school failure,' she argues that because schools are controlled by white people, African Americans have the burden of acting white in such a context. This is compounded by the fact that even if students do well in school they are faced with discrimination on the job market. Along with Ogbu, she suggests that the response of students is to not put forth the effort to do well in school, which largely results in their failure. (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). This education policy discourse had confluence with the conservative discourse in the sense that it legitimizes a false notion of meritocracy in education. It has congruence with the liberal discourse in the sense that, while it is critical of persisting racial inequalities, it does not problematize the neoliberal capitalist system as a determinant of educational outcomes, and places sole responsibility on the students themselves, and particularly their attitudes about education, as the primary determinant of educational success. (Darder, 2012)

Other cultural sociological explanations argue that even when controlling for class and socioeconomic indicators, there are still racial and ethnic differences in educational attainment that point to Asians as a model minority. For example, Kao and Thompson (2003) reviewed cultural and structural models intended to account for racial and ethnic differences in educational achievement, as well as models that incorporated both cultural and structural analysis. They found that even when one accounts for class differences, racial differences and patterns still exist in educational attainment and they conclude that Asians are culturally. Even though they intend to challenge the model minority myth by disaggregating the data on Asians as a group, their treatment of Asians throughout the research still gives them the status of culturally exceptional. (Kao & Thompson, 2003)

Harris, Jamison and Trujillo (2008), investigate differences in educational attainment between Asians and Latinos. Like Kao and Thompson (2003) they argue that even amongst the working class Asian groups there is a cultural advantage. Latino youth, they argue, are lacking this cultural advantage and the parental and familial characteristics of Asians. In this study Asians and Latinos are compared to whites as well as “native counterparts” in the country of origin. They frame their research as imperative given the huge populations of Asians and Latinos, their status as largest growing immigrant groups in the US, and the striking disparities between them. Their method seems nuanced but ultimately makes the same argument about the exceptional status of Asian parents and family structure that accounts for Asian success despite SES disadvantages. This research simply does not account for variance within multiple

identity and class groups, and variance according to different forms of capital - social and economic. (Harris, Jamison & Trujillo, 2008)

Spyros Konstantopoulos (2009) argues that the data in math and reading prove that Asians are a model minority group. He compares the achievement gap between low, middle and high achieving Asians and whites and argues that Asians are a model minority even within these margins. By comparing by achievement level he is presumably controlling for class and still showing that there is some special cultural reason why Asians are model minorities who excel even compared to whites and especially to African Americans. His explanation, like most other researching supporting the model minority thesis during this period, is Asian parenting (Konstantopoulos, 2009). Byun & Park (2012) characterize all Asians as successful and go as far as to say that the socioeconomic data is not important given their aggregate success.

Other cultural sociological approaches speak back to the model minority discourse more poignantly, by highlighting the fact that there are scores of Asians that are struggling at the bottom rungs of US society and are indeed indeed dependent on social subsidy programs and profiled by the police. (Chou and Feagin, 2008; Zia, 2001; Prashad, 2012) These studies highlight the simple fact that Asian kids in the US do not fit the model minority image and that, not only is Asian identity as profoundly hybrid as any other, but that Asians in the US face the same material struggles as African Americans, Indigenous Americans and Latinas/Latinos when it comes to racism, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice and exclusion. Some critical cultural-sociological approaches in education are based on large national data samples and make assertions

about the macro level policy, social and economic context in effort to disprove the idea that the 'model minority' thesis is evidence of the fact that there is a level playing field for whites and nonwhites (Yew, 2006).

For example, Suzuki (1977) is one of the earlier studies that disaggregated the data on Asians to show that Asian American median incomes fall below the income of whites even when controlling for educational status. He also shows that there was an even greater gap when controlling for education as well as geographical area. After Suzuki (1977) several researchers followed with analyses that exposed disparities in the mobility of Asians when compared to whites. These researchers argued that many Asians live in poverty, that Asians make less return on education than whites, don't hold as many high positions as whites, and do not have full democratic participation.

(Martinelli and Nagasawa, 1987; Cabezas & Kawaguchi, 1988; Jiobu, 1988; Hurh & Kim, 1989; Wong & Nagasawa, 1991; Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Hune & Chan, 1997) These narratives are in contradiction to narratives that maintain that the income brackets for Asians are higher than for whites. (Sowell, 1984) The problem with such narratives is that their lack of geographical specificity distorts class differentiation amongst Asians and generalizations about elite Asians are used to racialize all of us.

With the rise of China's economy and global political power a surge of cultural nationalist discourses about Asian exceptionalism have emerged. Pearce and Linn (2007) critiqued the assumption that a model minority is a group that assimilates to white culture by arguing that Chinese exceptionalism in education is not rooted in successful assimilation to white culture but in the fact that Chinese culture itself values

education. They affirm the model minority thesis by attributing the success of Chinese in the US to Chinese parenting and cultural variables that are rooted in authentic Chinese culture, but disapprove of the way that Chinese exceptionalism is used against US blacks with narratives about how Chinese are like whites. (Pearce & Linn, 2007)

Leung (2002) looks at the performance of students in 4 Asian countries on TIMMS exams and finds that even though they have exceptional performance on the exam, this cannot be linked to positive student attitudes because actually these students have bad attitudes about math and felt that they could not do well. He links their performance and attitude to Confucian modesty, or cultural nationalism, and humility and suggest that even more “subtle” attributes of Asians must account for their exceptional performance across the board. (Leung, 2002)

Cultural-Psychological Policy Discourses about Asians in Education

The difference between biological and cultural-psychological theories is simply the difference between DNA and psychological phenomena. In both cases, these differences come out from inside the body of the individual, whether from blood or brains. According to cultural - psychological theories, Asian exceptionalism in education is a result of variables associated with the individual or the individual conceived as part of a homogeneous collective. These inner capacities and variables are conceived as part of the inner life worlds of students and these inner worlds are then subject to the judgmental gaze and prejudice of cultural spectators and the instruments of psychological pseudo science, such as, for example, IQ tests. Generally then, cultural

theories focus on individual and group behavior as rooted in psychological mechanisms that are a thing of the body, even if they are learned. In this regard, in the model minority research that focuses on cultural - psychological explanations about Asian exceptionalism, the story of superior Asian cultural attitudes dominates.

The cultural – psychological approach includes variations of the choice argument that use the model minority discourse to valorize individualism and superior rationalization processes amongst Asians. Hsia (1998) argues that science and technology based occupations are chosen by Asians based on the level of payoff they will get after graduation as well as the likelihood of not failing due to language ability. Goyette and Xie (1999) tested Asian students against white students, instead of the usual test against black students, and found that Asians have higher motivation to achieve across ethnic groups when compared to the majority group. Fejgin (1995) compared the education of Jews and Asians and argued that class led to success for Jews but for Asians superior levels of motivation reflected in school choice, student attitudes and positive parental roles led to student success. Yee (1976) argues that Asians “have been able to ameliorate bias largely through strong motivation for educational and occupational achievement, cohesive family structure in which harmony and responsibility are maintained, and adaptability to social environmental conditions.” (Yee, 1976, pg. 57)

Other researchers look at the social behavior of Asian students, for example, the supposed “silencing effect” that the model minority thesis has on Asian students. The social cultural and psychological theories place the onus for reversing negative effects

associated with the model minority thesis back onto Asians ourselves or others, such as teachers and community members, who may lead the way for Asian students.

For example, Osajima (1998) argues that the model minority stereotype has many negative cultural and emotional implications for students who tend to then feel a lot of pressure to live up to it. He argues that Asian quietude and passiveness in class is a response to racism and pressure from the MM thesis and these issues will never surface unless educators problematize the thesis and help Asians break their silence. (Osajima, 1998) Regin & Adams (1990) and Pang (1991) argue that Asians feel a sense of learned helplessness and that they have to please their parents and this accounts for why Asian students do much better than other students. (Regin & Adams, 1990) Aikins & Easter (2008) argue that the model minority stereotype is misleading in that European American students have model minority cultural characteristics to a higher extent than Asians yet the model minority thesis leads teachers to ignore the needs of Asian students because they perceive them as superior. They warn that teachers need to sensitize themselves to cultural differences in learning styles so that Asian students don't fall behind. (Aikins & Easter, 2008)

A recent trend in model minority research points to intra-racial and intra-ethnic dynamics and, specifically, the intra-racial policing of behavior so that Asian students can maintain their status as a model minority and the benefits that accrue from this status. While these studies may be well-intentioned approaches they do not acknowledge the structural foundations of racist exploitation and exploitative racism. They still indirectly place the onus for changing patterns of inequality in education onto

Asians and the “community”. (Gibson, 1988; Zhou & Bankston, 1998; Lee, 2005; Lew, 2006; Park, 2011).

Some cultural psychological approaches treat the model minority thesis as a form of consciousness upon which policy determinations are made (Barringer, 1990). For proponents of this line of thinking, the solution lies in educating and correcting falsehoods associated with the thesis. The problem with this line of thinking is that it underestimates the immense investments in model minority discourses that are a conscious form of racial, class and gender subordination, as opposed to an unintentional consequence of social norms.

For example, Museus and Kiang (2009) point to the importance of educational research that disaggregates the data on Asians and describe five key “misconceptions” about Asians that impact education policymaking. They are that Asian Americans are all the same, are not really racial and ethnic minorities, do not encounter major challenges because of their race, do not seek or require resources and support, and that college degree completion is equivalent to success. Here, again, education policy is conceived as something that is informed by cultural, psychological and social phenomena, instead of vested interests and structural phenomena. These accounts acknowledge the structural impact of race and racism, but treat the model minority thesis itself as a cultural lens on the part of the observer.

For another example, Brydolf (2009) reports on the campaign to disaggregate the data at UC and collect different data from the diverse groups of Asians at UC. This analysis draws connections between how the model minority discourse impacts policy-

making and the trickle down effect that it has had on students in education. The problem is that this argument conflates race and class, thereby not challenging the model minority thesis and directly reinforcing it in some cases. Lee (2011), for example, also conflates class and race when he charges the Massachusetts educational board with racism. He argues that data should be disaggregated and that social policy reform must be ethnic group specific because different ethnic groups have different immigration histories and arrival times. He argues that the state board is able to legalize racism by aggregating data and not creating specific reforms based on ethnic groups. The problem is that in his analysis ethnic groups are racialized as class groups and class differences within racial and ethnic groups are not considered.

As you can see then, even those who intend to challenge the model minority thesis using even liberal, cultural-psychological models attribute the educational success or failure to the individual students' inner capacities, thereby still, however unintentionally, supporting the theoretical basis upon which genetic determinism rests.

For example, Grier-Reed & Ganuza (2011) argue that not all Asian students are model minorities and they designed a course for Hmong and African American students to improve "career self – efficacy." They suggested that career self-efficacy was the reason why these students do not excel in relation to their "European" counterparts. They suggested that they not only needed help setting goals and making a plan to achieve them, but that these students needed help with self appraisal and confidence. They suggest that culture and psychology holds these students back from being able to set up and execute a plan for building a career. For example, according to them African

American culture and students have a “present oriented time perspective” which inhibits them from gaining success. (Grier-Reed & Ganuza, 2011)

Considered against the backdrop of culture of poverty arguments, this Asian story tacitly acknowledges the challenges of racism and poverty but then goes on to suggest that Asians have been able to overcome these hardships because of their internal ability to make superior rational choices. By a logical extent of the argument, recent trends toward Asian poverty would indicate an inability of parents to influence their kids or inability of kids to acquire Asian culture. This line of thinking completely excludes social, political and economic imperatives that contribute to social inequality and injustice, again by outsourcing the responsibility onto the bodies of those who are most vulnerable to its thrashes. Further, this line of thinking creates the appearance of a logical choice structure, where no such structure or choices exist. If choices are constrained because of variables related to external circumstances, these “choices” are simply symptomatic of a larger structural problem and should not be seen as a locus of control in and of themselves, despite the unwavering fact of human agency. In other words, choices do not happen, or appear, in a vacuum.

Discussion: The Model Minority Discourse in Education Policy Research

In this chapter I have shown how the biological, cultural-psychological and cultural- sociological discourses about Asians in education, located within both the mainstream and critical approaches, lie on the same theoretical continuum because they all assert, either directly or by the logical end of their argument, that educational

attainment is a direct correlate of the individual or group inner capacities, predispositions or cultural inheritance. Even where they admit that race is a social construction, and racism a historical construction, they still give racism an endemic quality that reifies the notion that human beings very naturally tend to signify, differentiate – and hierarchically order.

The cultural arguments accounting for Asian success have gone from genetic based theories, to IQ, to social psychological theories, to theories about attitude and finally to theories about individual choices. In all of these variations, social and environmental factors have only been tacitly acknowledged for an ultimate reliance on theories that are profoundly gendered in their attachment of racial difference to a phenomenon of the body, and the working class, non-white body, in particular. I argue that these theories fall short because, in the case of the conservative arguments, they take a colorblind approach to recycling white supremacist and neoliberal discourse and strategy, while in the case of liberal discourses, they conceptualize the struggles of Asian students, and all students of color, solely within the analytics of white supremacy thereby sabotaging the increasing material impact that anti-neoliberal political strategy can have when it is conceptualized as a central part of anti-racist struggle. (Melamed, 2011; Darder, 2012)

When racism is treated as a biological, psychological or sociological phenomenon to the exclusion of analyses of space, history, social structure and political economy, the realm of possibility for alleviating the problems of racism lie within the strategy of changing hearts, minds and “attitude problems” at worst and changing civil rights based

social structures, without changing their fundamental neoliberal structuration, at best. Racism is partly a problem of the mind, psychology and social behavior. More fundamentally, it is a problem of exclusionary racial, social structures and systems. It remains undying because of the incorporation of racism, and racialism, into processes of neoliberalisation which are not addressed when our analysis of white supremacy is abstracted from neoliberal globalization. (Melamed, 2011) While this strategy may allow more working class and poor Asians, and people of color in general, more access to capital and power and more relative protection and safety from racially motivated violence, the latter is not guaranteed and the former still leaves the poor and working class majorities even further behind. So, while on the one hand it is certainly true that white supremacy has a dynamic of its own that is geographically and historically specific, and that white supremacy is far from over, and indeed strengthening in its movement, it is also true that any movement, social struggle or strategy against racism must be materialized by linkage with a strategy against neoliberal globalization. (Melamed, 2011)

The second point I would like to make here is that neoliberal globalization brings with it new racial formations. For example, processes of racialization are changing such that the group designated as model minority constantly changes and shifts, because the underlying neoliberal logic and system, still hasn't been displaced.

For example, in an article called "Race, Gender and Progress: Are Black American Women the New Model Minority?," Amadu Jacky Kaba (2008) makes the following argument:

This paper has presented massive data starting with the claim that there is a large body of academic literature which points to Asian Americans as model minorities because a very high proportion of them were at one time very poor and at the margins of society, but managed to pull themselves up. Some of the literature even suggested that non-Asians could emulate the good behavior of Asian Americans so that they too could become just as successful. It is then argued that the model minority concept could now be extended to include Black American women, because even more than Asian Americans, they have been the subgroup to have suffered the most in the history of not only the USA, but the entire Western Hemisphere or the New World. However, by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Black American women are among the most productive members of the American society. (Kaba, 2008, pg. 331)

In his comments on African Americans as the new model minority, Clarence Page (2007) notes that within colleges and universities, the increasing numbers of African, Caribbean and Afro-Latino immigrants call into question whether the aims of civil rights initiatives intended to equalize opportunity for African Americans are truly fulfilling their purpose. He argues that, "we tend to look at every aspect of diversity except economic class. Yet, the dream of upward mobility is an essential part of how we Americans like to think of ourselves." (Page, Real Clear Politics.com, 2007) An analysis of changing economic formations linked to patterns of transnational migration of African people, must be connected to an analysis of white supremacy in the US. If this does not happen,

then working class African Americans, in addition to working class Asians, Latinos and Indigenous people will get lost in a largely dematerialized push for “diversity.”

The third and final point I would like to make here is that in the context of neoliberal multiculturalism, racial signification has become so abstracted and ubiquitous that, as non-white racialized and gendered bodies are “mainstreamed into the mainstream,” discourses that reify racial inferiority/subordination circulate in ‘color blind’ educational policy research about the importance of family, parenting and community, for example, in educational outcomes.(Melamed, 2011) These colorblind policies punish working class people of color, and also serve to racialize and punish working class whites as non-whites. So, while the fundamental white supremacist narrative of cultural and moral superiority is not displaced and remains in both explicit and implicit policy narratives that criminalize working class bodies in education, white supremacy has the appearance of being neutralized by advances made as a result of the civil right framework. Meanwhile, white supremacy and neoliberal globalization, inextricably binded and binding, work to punish, criminalize and exploit the worlds poor, and poor people of color especially, at new heights of intensity and scope. We may find that the model minority discourse is the central mechanism for rationalizing violence against working class groups within the US in the years to come, particularly as whites become a minority in the US.

Conclusion: Rematerializing Antiracism in Education

The primary argument made here is that conservative and liberal educational policy discourses which abstract race and racism from its manifestation in processes of neoliberalization effectively dematerialize any prospect of anti-racist strategy in education. (Brenner, Peck & Theodore, 2010; Darder, 2012; Melamed, 2011) I problematized the racialization of Asians as model minorities in educational policy research, and particularly conservative and liberal variations of this racialization. (Darder, 2012) Further I outlined how the biological, psychological and sociological discursive trajectories exclude the manifestation of racism that occurs outside of the body, in the historical, material and built in aspects of the spatial environment. In the next chapter I develop the case of South Asians in US education to further illuminate the contradictions of the prevailing conservative and liberal educational approaches and demonstrate how the model minority discourse actually materially impacts the lives of South Asians in the US, and particularly working class South Asians in educational contexts.

CHAPTER 4

THE EDUCATION OF SOUTH ASIANS IN THE U.S.

“Through taxi drivers, I have learned the true meanings of honesty and humor, forgiveness and fairness, the maturity to handle difficulties with grace, and, at all times, the importance of dignity... (the drivers) reminded me of the town in which I grew up, where I learned to struggle, fight hunger and poverty, and see the dignity of the working class.”⁵

-Bhairavi Desai

Executive Director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance

The model minority thesis, in its hegemonic function, attempts to render invisible the actual struggles, activism, hardships, radicalism – and dignity - of the South Asian working class and poor. Bhairavi Desai’s life and the success of the New York Taxicab Worker’s Alliance is a testimony, however, to the incompleteness of the model minority politic, the incompleteness of the State and multinational corporate attempt to filter South Asian radicalism – and working class radicalism across racial groups - into conservative and liberal projects. Uncovering how this function of the model minority politic operates in the context of education, as opposed to the context of Taxi driving, is at the heart of what I try to develop in this chapter.

In this chapter I argue that prevailing educational policy discourses on South Asians in the US are severely limited in their usefulness for both conceptualizing and addressing the challenges faced by South Asians in educational contexts. There are

⁵ Approximately 60% of the members of the NYTWA are South Asians, and the entire membership consists of people of color and whites from the US and around the world working together in solidarity, despite the racial hegemony of the model minority thesis and other discourses which would pit them against one another. This quote can be accessed at [leadershipforchange.org](http://www.leadershipforchange.org) on July 6, 2013. <http://www.leadershipforchange.org/awardees/awardee.php?ID=307>

racial and gender preferences, especially in white collar and professional fields in the US for South Asians and particularly Indians, however the margins of inequality are rapidly widening and the kind of abuse and exploitation faced by working class and poor South Asians is completely covered over because of the currency of the model minority thesis in the racist, patriarchal, nationalist and neoliberal context of US education. Educational trajectories largely determine labor trajectories and here I argue that the discourses in educational policy research that do exist on South Asians, and particularly the dearth of research related to 'South Asian identity development,' largely eschews, however incompletely, the possibility of materially intervening in structures that displace and exploit the labor of working class South Asians. In sum, the example of South Asians is illuminated to provide an example of the way that the model minority discourse is contradictory in all its biological, cultural-sociological, and cultural-psychological variants in education, and how it still materially impacts upon the lives of South Asians in and beyond education.

Model Minority Politics and South Asians in the US

South Asians in the US occupy a precarious position when considered in relation to the prevailing conservative and liberal education policy discourses regarding the education of Asians (Darder, 2012). On the one hand there is literature that tends to clump all Asians together, regardless of class and history, and whether arguing for or against the model minority thesis. Further, even within this literature, the emphasis remains on Chinese, Koreans and Japanese students, and to a lesser extent Southeast Asian students, such as Cambodians, Laotians, Thai, and Hmong students. Also, since

9/11, the racialization of South Asians has largely shifted from Asian to Arab and/or Muslim (Puar and Raj, 2004). On the other hand there is literature that points out contradictions to these narratives by identifying patterns of variation in educational attainment based on such variables as class, language, gender, and immigration history. A case study of South Asians then is important and useful because it illustrates the problems with how race, racism and anti-racism are conceptualized in the prevalent educational discourses. In this paper I argue that conservative and liberal narratives largely locate the locus of racial difference for educational attainment in variables related a concept of culture that has philosophical and genealogical derivatives in a continuum of genetic, psychological-cultural and sociological-cultural theories of difference (Darder, 2012; Darder and Torres, 2004). I argue that this conceptualization of racial inequality de-materializes anti-racist struggle in education and, in fact, mobilizes anti-racism in the interest of neoliberal globalization (Darder, 2012; Melamed, 2011). I explicate the case of South Asians to make an epistemological and ontological critique of mainstream and critical education policy research on race and racism that is intended to call into question the very way in which we think about and map anti-racism and approach the analysis of difference in education.

I proceed in this chapter by reviewing the history of South Asians in the US with an emphasis on education policy and model minority discourses. I then review education policy research that discusses South Asians. I finally discuss critical gaps in this research, as evidence by contradictions between the actual history of South Asians in the US, and the way this history and South Asians are socially constructed in the

education policy discourses. I finally draw on both cross-disciplinary research and interdisciplinary research methods in education, to describe a fuller picture of the educational challenges of South Asians. I conclude with a discussion of the epistemological and ontological claims that the case of South Asians in US education reveals about educational policy research as an enterprise.

The Immigration and Education of South Asians in the US

This history is guided by the following questions: What are the primary historical forces shaping the lives of South Asians in the US? What are the class, racial, national, gendered and sexual politics of the model minority thesis? How do these politics shape the roles and expectations of South Asians? How have South Asians responded to these expectations?

South Asians in the US include immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives Islands. South Asians immigrated in significant numbers to the US in roughly three historical periods. The first was from 1875 until 1964, the second begins after 1965, and the third after 1986. The largest group of South Asian immigrants to the US has been Indians, however the history I provide here will cover economic and political policy changes that led to differential patterns of immigration related to gender, class, national affiliation and Visa status.

The First Wave

This initial wave of South Asian immigrants numbered around 12,000, half of whom arrived after 1946. The immigrants of the first half were primarily Indian, male,

Sikh laborers from colonial India. They worked railroad, lumber, mining and agricultural jobs along the California coast through the Northern US coast and Canada. During this wave there were Asiatic exclusion leagues across the Americas. The series of Anti-Asian immigration laws in the US between the 1870s and the 1930s, including the Immigration Act of 1870, Chinese Exclusion Act, anti-miscegenation laws, immigration acts between 1882 and 1934 limiting the influx of immigrants from China, Japan, India and the Philippines, laws restricting the ownership of land, internment camps and a series of legal cases and appeals indicate that 'whiteness' was progressively socially and politically constructed through legal processes to exclude different groups of Asians from claims to citizenship and fair and equitable wages and labor and citizenship rights along with other non-white racialized groups (Shah,1999; Prashad 2000).

The *Ozawa* decision of 1922 ruled that Asians were not white, and that white was synonymous with Caucasian. When Bhagat Singh Thind tried to obtain citizenship by claiming Caucasian identity in 1923 it was overruled because South Asians were no longer classified under the new category “Caucasoid”. Through this series of structural changes in US law and policy, Indians, were aggressively excluded from the material privileges of whiteness and between 1923 and 1927 sixty-five South Asians were denaturalized, many of which had hard won their rights during years of legal battle (Dasgupta, 2006). It wasn't until the Luce-Celler Bill of 1946, that citizenship rights were given to Indian immigrants and between 1946 and 1964 around 6,000 South Asian immigrants came to the US. (Shah, 1999)

This period marks the beginning of contradictory US racialization discourses as applied to South Asians. On the one hand Indians were a welcomed new immigrant group that was racialized as a model minority when compared to existing, local, non-white, racial groups. The argument was that Indians could work harder and better than other non-white racial groups. Indians were culturally upheld for holding the courage to confront a primitive and caste-ridden domestic society in India. Still, other discourses, at other times, likened the immigration of Indians to an invasion and Indians were targeted for violence and state sponsored regimes of violence and exploitation for fear that they would take over the US. (Prashad, 2000; Shah, 1999) Riots and violence against South Asian laborers along the West Coast, most notably in Bellingham and Seattle, Washington as well as Marysville, California are a examples of how labor politics were a central determinant of the racialization of South Asians as not white (Prashad, 2000; Shah, 1999)

Hemant Shah (1999) addresses this contradictory discourse In “Race, Nation and Citizenship: Asian Indians and the Idea of Whiteness in the U.S. Press, 1906-1923.” Shah offers a history of the first wave immigrants through a discursive analysis of pervasive themes in the popular press of the time. According to Shah, the racial ambiguity of South Asians was “fixed” by a massive media campaign that inevitably influenced the result of the Thind case.

Shah’s research reveals that Indians during this time were racialized in media discourses in 5 ways. First was the set of discourses that constructed a “Hindu Conspiracy” to overthrow British imperialism in India. In fact, Hemant notes that some

105 men and women were arrested for “violating neutrality laws.” The second, were discourses about legal cases of Indians with regard to how Indians were to be racially classified. The third category was of the Anti-South Asian violence that occurred along the West Coast, the fourth a “human and miscellaneous category” about the lives of Indians, including the lack of Indian women, and the fifth was a discourse trend related to debates around pro and anti-Indian legislation. Shah (1999) argues that before the 1917 “Hindu Conspiracy” case, low caste Indians were socially constructed as “culturally, physically and mentally inferior to Whites,” while higher caste Indians employed in the professional industries were socially constructed in a more positive light. For example, Shah quotes one media article: “Mr. Balsara is a pure descendent of the Persian sect who, during their 12 centuries of residence in India, have religiously abstained from intermarriage with any other people.” (Shah, 1999, pg.256)

Hemant’s critical race approach is partially correct. The media was indeed used to provide a hegemonic function for the exclusion and subjugation of Indians in the interest of maintaining white supremacy and Indian caste hierarchies. However, it is only partially correct because it is critical to analyze the labor politics of these discourses where Indians – as a particular class of laborers – were constructed as a threat to the white and other displaced workers in the region. The racialization of Indians varied by class to welcome those Indians that filled important labor shortages in the professional industries and also Indians who were not anti-colonials. The differential racialization of working class and poor South Asians, regardless of caste background, was not only reflective of the pursuit of white supremacy, but a particular purpose for white

supremacy to both politically subjugate anti-colonial Indians and legitimize exploitation of the labor of these poor Indians. In sum then, the oppression, subjugation and exploitation of Indians must be viewed in a more dynamic historical and material framework.

During this first wave women largely did not immigrate along with men, though in some cases, such as the immigration of Kanta Chandra Gupta and other women who were active in the Ghadar party in 1910 have been noted. (Dasgupta, 2006; Shah, 1999) The male immigrants to the US sent remittances home to support families in other colonial cities and/or married women who were living locally, primarily those were often labeled Mexican in the popular press. For example, Hemant's research brings up an important point about how the relative absence of South Asian women during this period itself plays a critical role in the gendering and racialization of South Asian men as a threat (Shah, 1999). Despite the absence of South Asian women, female sexuality was a central trajectory that was used to rationalize and justify the separating and hierarchical ordering of races (Battacharya, 1998; Zacharias, 2003). Importantly, the purpose of this separating and hierarchical ordering of Indians in relation to other racial groups during this first wave, along the lines of gender, nationality, caste, religion, and race was a hegemonic function that served the interests of colonialism and global capital, two inextricably linked projects.

The Second Wave

South Asian women started to immigrate to the US in larger numbers during the

post 1965 Wave and came primarily as H4 dependent status Visa holders (Kelkar, 2011). Their husbands or immediate family members, the primary Visa status holders, were not the physical laborers of the first wave, and had already attained higher education degrees in the old country, often in the science and technology based fields. Their labor was strategically sought after by the US State that was turning its eyes toward competition in the nuclear arms race. Jyostna Vaid (1999) notes that these women were often highly skilled like their husbands but they had to deal with large wage disparities and discrimination on the US job market (Vaid, 1999). Kelkar (2011) further notes that, in addition to the cultural and linguistic challenges of being in the US, most of the second wave women, as H4 holders, could not legally work, were not given a social security number, were legally restricted from getting a bank account, a drivers license, and other such necessities (Kelkar, 2011). In very important material ways, and even continuing into the third wave, this wave of women was dependent on their husbands for survival, and if their husband was abusive, they had very little recourse (Supriya, 2001; Kelkar, 2011) Further, “their value (was) seen largely in terms of their roles as wives and mothers who bear full responsibility for housework and childcare, whether they worked outside the home or not, and to do so without protesting.” (Kelkar, 2011, p. 30)

This was just the beginning of what becomes a long time burden for South Asian women. The burden is not taking care of the family that they loved and choose to love, but that whether they were partnered with South Asian men or not they had little recourse when they’re labor and bodies were being exploited and abused. This is most

directly related to the racist and patriarchal structures of capitalist US society that allow men to get away with it, as opposed to human nature or men's nature. On the one hand then, women were dealing with violence, discrimination and exploitation within the mainstream society, and on the other, in some cases, dealing with the same within the context of the South Asian model minority "community" and family, even if the community was a 'leftist' or 'progressive' community, as we see the feminist and queer critiques of South Asians 'communities' that emerge during the third wave (Kukke & Shah, 2000).

Despite women's lack of access to education and restricted movement in public spaces during this time, women still played a critical role in reproducing the racialization of South Asians as model minorities which delivered material benefits, largely through their 'cultural work' in social and religious organizations (Vaid, 1999). Dasgupta (2006) notes that in the 1970's South Asian women "structured the daily routines of...places of worship; created cultural spaces on the premises where children could learn traditional songs, dances, and receive religious instruction; and met with other women to form emotional neighborhoods. " (Dasgupta, 2006, p. 10) Vaid (1999) argues that women's organizations "were structured around making women feel and function better in their new environment, at work and at home. Emphasis was placed on promotion of positive contributions of women in public and private spheres, providing community social services on a limited, informal basis, and engaging in outreach and professional networking." (Vaid, 1999, pg. 115) While marital conflict and abuse did happen, that sometimes resulted in divorce and single parenthood where mothers took on the role of

sole provider, these instances were conceived as very much aberrations in a community that was in every other case a model minority.

In this way, despite the subjugation of women along the trajectory of gender, race and sexuality in particular, women still very much participated in the kinds of activities and roles that would bring class based benefits and material rewards related to social and economic capital to the family – by separating the private from the public to reaffirm the model minority identity of the family unit itself. In this way, the patriarchy of the old country, was able to rearticulate with the post-colonial history of the US, to re-entrench a gendered and enraced politics of labor.

The model minority image of a South Asian women emerging during this second wave, then, was of a “quiet, submissive, traditional, asexual and socio-politically unaware woman whose central role is to take care of her husband and children” (Dasgupta, 1998, pg. 67). Largely because of their status as dependents without working and student status Visa’s, these women were largely completely economically dependent on their husbands and fathers. Both men and women had a stake in performing gender differentiated model minority identities for the marginal benefits this performance delivered within the white supremacist and capitalist structures of the US.

For men, the choice was to maintain the model minority image and, perhaps, maintain the privileges that come with ‘community’, such as economic and social advantages, particularly when compared to African Americans and Latinos, or do not maintain the model minority image and suffer the consequences historically imposed on

African Americans and Latinos in the US. Further the model minority image even allowed South Asians to join with elites and benefit from the exploitation of African Americans and Latinos, particularly the working classes. Even though the gender performance of the model minority varied for women, women had the same two choices. However, because they were economically subordinate to men and because their Visa status denied equal rights, the repercussions were different and the stakes even higher. In other words, women's choices were either work to uphold the model minority image of the family and continue to, perhaps, benefit from the protection of a male breadwinner, or do not and she and her children will suffer huge consequences related to unemployment, abandonment, deportation, even homelessness. This was and continues to be the case particularly when husbands and fathers are physically, sexually, economically, emotionally, and verbally abusive. When the consequence was poverty, women had to determine how much they and their children could tolerate and survive.

Ann Morning (2001), in an article titled "The racial identification of South Asians in the United States" draws on Omi and Winant's historical racial formation framework to analyze how US Census bureau categorizations impact the racial subjectivities of South Asians and how South Asians have historically mobilized and distinguished ourselves in relation to categories on the census. She found that poor and working class families, where females were the head of household and where households were located in multiracial and working class geographic locations, were more likely to identify as black, where upper and middle class households were more likely to identify

as white in the 1970 census. This study is important in the sense that it reveals the racialized, and gendered class politics that were happening during the emergence of the model minority thesis during the Civil Rights movement, when no option other than white or black existed for South Asians who felt little sense of racial affiliation with other Asian groups, such as Chinese and Koreans. It reveals the vital role that women and the family unit played in constructing the model minority image. This paper is useful in the sense that it takes the process of racial affiliation out of the context of cultural affiliation, and towards an acknowledgement of the politics of strategic racial affiliations based on desires for upward economic mobility. It also offers insights into the subjective experiences of women who were otherwise left without the support of 'model minority' communities and the inextricable relationship between gender, sexuality, model minority politics and anti-black and brown racism in the interest of global capital.

The Third Wave

With the third wave we see a splitting class structure with increasing levels of poverty and wealth amongst South Asians as well as increasing numbers of South Asian women in formal educational spaces and the labor market. We see increasing numbers of South Asians from different countries within South Asia immigrating with large numbers immigrating to urban centers and as well as rural cities in the US. South Asians are profoundly diverse religiously, linguistically, ethnically, and in terms of class, sexual and generational identity.

The increasing numbers of South Asian women in education is largely because of the coming of age of second generation South Asian women and Visa provisions that

allow increasing numbers of women to enter the US with provisions to work and study. In fact, many women immigrate from South Asian not as dependents but as primary student Visa holders (Vaid, 1999). The increasing economic, educational, and citizenship rights amongst South Asian women on the one hand offer layers of protection, security and mobility, but on the other hand these new 'rights' also mean they have to do all of the work in the house, all of the work outside of the house, and sometimes attend school to ensure the future security of their children and families. This is particularly true for the rapidly increasing number of South Asian women who are employed as working class laborers or laborers in family businesses where the margin or profit is directly related to the exploitation of their 'free labor' (Espiritu, 1999). Further, in this context it is clearer to see how violence against women extends beyond the boundaries of the home and 'private' sphere to include violence against women who are tracked into unemployment, forced to provide free labor, or tracked into working class jobs with little pay and little to no benefits and security for their family.

So, during the third wave we begin to see more contradictions to the model minority thesis simply because the class structure of the South Asian population of the US is changing and becoming more visible, exposing contradictions to the thesis that were always there. While immigration patterns of the 60's and 70's that consisted of professional and skilled South Asians coming to the US under occupational Visa provisions continues, the Immigration Act of 1986 as well as Family Reunification, allows for higher numbers of South Asians who occupy a working class and poor position in the US to immigrate (Khandelwal, 2002). Over the course of the past two decades the

number of South Asians in the US has tripled to 3.4 million, and class, ethnic, religious and gender diversity within and amongst South Asian groups has significantly intensified (US Census Bureau, 2010). In this wave we see increasing numbers of immigrants from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka that are a result of changing immigration provisions and policies. As a result of the 1990 Diversity Visa Lottery, the Bangladeshi population in the US rose 248% between 1990 and 2000 (US Census Bureau, 2010).

While a greater percentage of South Asian Americans 25 years and over have advanced graduate or professional degrees (from 23% to 34%) compared to the general U.S. population (9%), they also have a slightly higher percentage (around 3%) with less than fifth grade education than the general population (2%). There are a higher percentage of women than men with less than a fifth grade education, especially among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Further, despite average high income, South Asian Americans have high poverty levels, across many groups—families (from 7% to 17%), families with female householder, no husband present (from 9% to 31%), individuals (from 10% to 21%), the elderly (from 9% to 27%) and children (8% to 25%). Nearly one in four Bangladeshi (25%) and one in five Pakistani (20%) children live below the poverty line compared to less than one in six for the general population. (Making Data Matter, 2000)

This third wave of immigrants comes with a rapid increase in the number of South Asian women working outside of the home. (Rangaswamy, 2007; Espiritu, 1999) As in the second wave, however in addition to working outside of the home, it is also South Asian women who bear primary responsibility for doing cultural work that

preserves the model minority image of the family and community. (Dasgupta, 1998; Kurien 1999;)

With the third wave of immigration we see that almost half of the Indian students immigrating to the US are women, compared to 70% in 1980's and 97% in the 1950's. (Kurien, 1999) However, a study by Kibria (1998) shows that 41.9% of Indian men in the US hold professional degrees, while the same is true for only 27.7% of Indian women (Kibria, 1998). Parents are more likely to invest in the education of sons, while the education of girls is regarded as an avenue for increasing marriageability. So while education is considered a priority for South Asian girls to a certain extent, it is often in the interest of increasing their marriageability in a system that is deeply entrenched in arranged marriages, and girls are primarily socialized to become perfect daughters, wives and mothers. (Bhandari, 1999)

With this third wave we also see increasing patterns of resistance to gender, sexual, racial, religious, class and other hierarchical forms of exploitation against South Asian women. Jyostna Vaid (1999) notes this is largely because second generation South Asian women became college age as well as increasing numbers of first generation women coming to the US in pursuit of higher education, as opposed to having to come on a Visa dependent status. Beyond a degree, higher education offered South Asian women a space where women's organizing could evolve in solidarity with the local, national, and transnational struggles of South Asian and all women (Vaid, 1999).

During this third wave we also see an increase in opportunities for South Asian women to resist and reshape hetero normative discourses and power structures. Kukke

and Shah (2000) note that the Queer South Asian movement began in the 1980's. This movement continues to struggle to achieve gender parity, and has historically been comprised of middle and upper middle class professionals from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Further, the movement reception by both the mainstream South Asian "community" and the progressive South Asians leaves much needed, both in terms of the mainstreams outright hostility and passive aggressiveness towards gender queer, lesbian, gay and transsexual South Asians, and the progressive Left "'sexuality is not my issue'" approach to Queer organizing (Kukke and Shah, 2000, pg. 135).

During the third wave, 9/11 is a significant event shaping the racial and labor politics of South Asians. In their article "Perverse Projectiles Under the Spectrum of (Counter)Terrorism," Puar and Rai (2004) take up the issue of how we must reinterpret model minority politics in a post 9-11 world. They locate 9-11 as the third significant "nodal point" in the racial formation of South Asians in the US, with Bhagat vs. Singh as the first and the Immigration and Naturalization act of 1965 as the second. (Puar & Rai, 2004) They argue that the stakes are even higher after this third nodal point for those who are trying to retain model minority status and especially for those who go by the model minority wayside and are unable to fit in. They argue that "while heightened public and political paranoia about those suspected to be linked to terrorist activities encompasses greater numbers of Muslims, Arab Americans, South Asian Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Muslim Indians, we also see a retrenching and resolidification of the discourse of U.S. exceptionalism and growing conservatism of the model minorities emblematic of it." (Puar and Raj, 2004, pg. 67) Puar and Raj (2004) argue that especially

now South Asians must address the relationship between nationalisms and that post 9/11 model minority hood is captured in the increasing intimacy between forms and expressions of Hindu nationalism with US nationalism and Neoliberalism. (Puar and Raj, 2004; Patel, 2008)

Analysis of Historical Waves

There was resistance to white racism during the first period of South Asian immigration. Still structural realities encouraged South Asians to identify with whiteness and argue they were white in order to gain various rights that came with whiteness. Here we see the inception of model minority politics as it concerns South Asians. During the second period of immigration the model minority discourse is more clearly fashioned in relation to the international division of labor and power and proponents ahistorically argue that the relative successes of South Asians in the US are due to superior cultural value systems, as opposed to selective immigration policies that favored professional South Asian classes who were already relatively caste and class privileged in the old country. Now, in the most recent period of immigration we see even wider gaps between social identity groups within the South Asian racial group along the lines of class, yet the Model Minority discourse is applied to all Asians despite these differences. This raises the stakes for those who are left out of the discourse at an unprecedented level.

With the rise of neoliberal globalization and the War on Terror, we as South Asians are increasingly finding ourselves on the other side of the model minority

discourse. In terms of capital and power the stakes are high and this has created strong divisions within the US South Asian diaspora. As we see the rise of India and China, economic decline in the US, post 9/11 racism against South Asians, Arabs and Muslims around the world, and the continuing aggressive invasion of majority Muslim countries in the Middle East and South Asia, the transnational and domestic production and consumption of the model minority discourse promises much more to Asians who are vying in order to retain probationary white status for its social and material benefits, at the expense of other people, including other Asians, and especially working class Asians. In its emphasis on culture, diversity and inclusion politics, the conservative and liberal educational discourses offer no viable critique of or platform against the politics of Asian exceptionalism vis a vis the model minority myth. (Darder, 2012) And further, even working class South Asians are not exempt from literally buying into the benefits of model minority hood for the protection as well as social and economic capital, however marginal, it affords. The South Asian example shows how globalization requires a new approach to analyzing politics and social justice that allows for increasing variation between and within races, class and gender groups along with an analysis of structural relations of exploitation and oppression.

Education Policy Research on South Asians

Considering the fact that South Asians have been in the US since the 19th century, the absence of policy research on the education of South Asians in the US, and the education and school experiences of South Asian children and youth in particular, is

shockingly limited. In contrast, research on South Asians in Education in the UK and Canada is comparatively more widely available, more representative of intra-racial, national, gender, class, linguistic and religious politics, and more representative of inter and intra generational differences.

For example, let's examine "The Education of British South Asians: Ethnicity, Capital and Class Structure," by Tahir Abbas (2004). This study looked at the differences in educational performance between Bangladeshis, Indians and Pakistani's in Birmingham. The city of Birmingham is treated as a specific instantiation of race and class dynamics and the inequality are theorized, not necessarily in terms cultural psychological and cultural sociological models as complete systems in and of themselves. Rather, educational performance is theorized as a variable most closely associated with the "post-war immigration and settlement history and its varying selective and comprehensive schools." (Abbas, 2004, pg. 21) A primary argument he makes, drawing on Bourdieu, is that there are differences in the kinds of capital each group possesses at different historical time periods, forms of capital that he identifies in the book as economic, social and cultural. He argues that these varying forms of capital account for racial differences in educational performance. (Abbas, 2004)

National differences in paradigmatic approaches to research on South Asians in education doesn't necessarily speak to class differences or differences in ethnic and national affiliation in each country. Rather, this difference speaks to the power of the model minority thesis to frame educational policy research on South Asians in the US, specifically.

That being said, in this section I review primary trends in research on South Asian education in the US. I argue that within US education policy discourses on South Asians there is a tendency on the one hand to mobilize cultural-sociological education policy discourses to represent South Asians as model minorities with superior family structures and cultures, and on the other hand, to mobilize cultural-psychological education policy discourses to represent us as perpetual foreigners for whom cultural, social and psychological adaptation to US life is a primary struggle. I argue that, in effect, this analysis claims to be celebratory of diversity on the one hand, while dematerializing anti-racist strategizing on the other hand (Melamed, 2011; Darder. 1991) I argue that this strategy for representing South Asians as a perpetual foreigner is an attempt to legitimize aggressive actions intended to secure the role of the US in a global competition over resources, particularly against the rise of tiger economies. On the other hand I argue that the representation of South Asians as a model minority is a strategy to justify the roll back of the welfare state, privatization of public spaces and other such neoliberal reforms. (Prashad, 2012)

Much of the cultural-sociological educational policy research on the education of South Asians continues to treat South Asians as a relatively recent immigrant group and racially frames 'social problems' amongst South Asians in educational contexts, such as on college and university campuses, around issues such as arranged marriage and cultural adaptation (Burton, 2010). While these certainly are issues that are relevant to South Asian populations, the tendency in the education policy canon to highlight these issues in a problematic frame to the exclusion of issues such as poverty, race and gender

discrimination, and labor exploitation lends itself to the conclusion that South Asians are still very much 'foreigners' adjusting to a new land. Despite the specificity of struggles experienced by different racial groups largely determined by the history of their racialization, this particular racializing tendency in the education policy research collapses the reality of the staggered arrival of South Asians to the US and fact that this community is afflicted by issues that similarly hinder other communities of color in the US, regardless of racial and ethnic affiliation.

On the other hand, and in contradiction to the perpetual foreigner stereotype, some cultural-sociological discourses on South Asians in schools overwhelmingly support the model minority thesis that South Asians have a superior familial and cultural value system that accounts for why South Asians outperform other non-white racialized groups. A study by Rietz, Zhang and Hawkins (2011) comparing second generation mobility for South Asian, Chinese and Afro-Caribbeans in the US, Canada and Australia found that despite the economic and professional status of their parents, second generation South Asians and Chinese in all of these countries experience strong upward mobility, while Afro-Caribbeans and other Asian groups experienced enough relative upward mobility to disprove theories of downward assimilation. They use their findings to argue that poverty and low income in the first generation for South Asians, as well as Chinese and Afro-Caribbeans, do not seem to be challenges for the upward mobility of second-generation youth. For South Asian youth in particular, they explain that this is because the South Asian parents impart the value of education onto their children. (Rietz, Zhang and Hawkins, 2011) In this line of analysis, the social and cultural capital

that comes along with being racialized as a model minority that Abbas (2004) takes into consideration in his study is not addressed.

Other cultural-sociological research acknowledges that South Asians are not all doing well in school and that there are contradictions to the one dimensional model minority thesis, but suggests that this is because of parental and family failure. In an indirect way then, this research trend also supports the thesis by placing full responsibility for educational outcomes onto parents and the family, reinforcing the meritocratic ideology, and letting the larger political and economic US structure, within which education is a strategically reproductive institution, off the hook.

For example, in a study titled “School Adjustment of South Asian Immigrant Children in the United States” by Gauri Battacharya (2000), the author argues that children’s success is based on how closely parents are able to articulate their expectations and values with teachers’ expectations and values. She argues that the greater the association, the greater the chance that South Asian immigrant children will succeed. The author suggests that cultural and attitudinal variables as well as parenting are overwhelmingly responsible for student failure, as opposed to variables associated social and political structures and systems. She goes even further to suggest that South Asian parents should go through an acculturation process themselves if they want their children to succeed. (Battacharya, 2000) The irony is that this is probably true in many respects, to move forward as a competitive player in a neoliberal system of education, one must perform a stereotypical version of elite whiteness.

Much of the cultural-psychological research on South Asians in education or on the education of South Asians draws on identity development models. Identity development models attempt to explain how intergenerational groups of South Asians adjust to living in the US along a very normative and assuming developmental trajectory. Identity development models exist for other people of color and even whites. As these identity development models are engaged in relation to Asian Americans there is an assumed process of typified cognitive negotiations that the individual must engage in order to resolve contradictions between communal, family and cultural values and ways of being and the dominant culture of the new society.

In terms of identity development models that apply specifically to South Asians, Ibrahim, Hifumi and Singh's (1997) "Asian American Identity Development: A Culture Specific Model for South Asian Americans" is important to review and consider here. This article begins by isolating a list of variables that are important to consider when thinking about South Asian identity formation and suggesting that the model offered ties all the multidimensional variables together. These variables include, for example, ethnic group, community, religion, social class, sexual orientation, etc. The authors argue that the model presented largely draws on "generic" models offered for identity development, but that it must be modified when working with South Asians according to whether they are first, second or third generation. The model proposed has the following developmental stages: Pre-encounter or Conformity Stage, Dissonance Stage, Resistance and Emersion Stage, Introspection Stage, and Synergistic Articulation and Awareness Stage. The author's argue that the first two stages do not necessarily apply

to South Asians who are supposedly used to living in diverse environments. Further the authors isolate a set of characteristics which “may be consistent for all South Asian Americans which include: self-respect, dignity, and self control; respect for family/filial piety; respect for age; awareness and respect for community; fatalism; humility.” (Ibrahim et al, 1997, pg.208) Finally, the “worldview” of South Asians is characterized, in a rather contradictory statement, as “a high regard for hierarchy in social relationships, and respect for tradition, along with a high need for egalitarian relationships.” (Ibrahim et al, 1997, pg.208) I discuss this article at length primarily because it gets to the heart of how the model minority thesis is supported within research discourses. This article takes a model minority image of South Asians and suggests that it applies in a very standard way across the population and completely distorts the historical and material context in which the thesis evolved. (Ibrahim, Hifumi, & Singh, 1997)

The education policy literature on South Asians thus largely positions the biological come cultural-psychological or cultural-sociological trajectory as the primary determinant of educational outcomes, where the terms that characterize both of these trajectories are based on the racist assumption of model minority hood or being a perpetual foreigner. This pattern of racialization is not arbitrary, it is motivated in the sense that it strategically figures into the ideological strategy for securing the role of the US in processes of white supremacist, neoliberal globalization.

When you compare the history of South Asians in the US, to the options offered by the conservative and liberal discourses on Asian education, the gaps become obvious. Education itself is revealed as an important space in which South Asians are

socialized into thinking of ourselves in ways that are not only counterintuitive, but fuel the processes of neoliberal globalization that largely work against us, particularly the working class and poorest among us.

Interdisciplinary Research on South Asians and Education in the US

An important trend in interdisciplinary research on the education of South Asians in the US is not explicitly about education policy or education research in the first right, but is, among other things, about youth identity as it is performed and manipulated within educational contexts. This trend in research is overwhelmingly critical of the model minority discourse and the ethnographic method provides a rich description of the actual social location of South Asians in US educational institutions. The ethnographers I highlight in this section focus on South Asian youth in schools and have an eye towards examining issues related to cultural politics and representation. The cross disciplinary studies I highlight here are rich and useful in the sense that they provide much cultural description, that reveal contradictions to the model minority story, that can be used in the interest of informing educational policy, practice and research, despite the fact that they aren't official educational studies. Importantly, the ethnographic method alone doesn't make this research useful, it is the way that the ethnographic method is able to get at the subtleties of the relationship between education, race, class and other identities that is important about this research. Focusing on intersections of the model minority thesis with Indian migrants in the US is Shalini Shankar (2008). In her study of Silicon Valley high school students, she notes how

despite the fact that Indian students share a racial identity, their language use, in addition to class status, distinguishes between who can benefit from model minority status and who cannot. Language in this context is determined a racializing variable with consequences for those who do not perform monolingual US English. She found that the monolingual, upper middle class Indian American students who are “linguistically unmarked” are able to retain privileges associated with model minority status and align themselves with white students. The heteroglossic group of middle class Indian migrants whose “styles of speaking include the use of Punjabi, English, Bollywood dialogue and song lyrics, hip-hop lyrics and lexicon, Desi Accented English, California Slang, and Spanish” occupy a position in the racial hierarchy that aligns them with Mexican and Vietnamese Americans. (Shankar, 2008, pg. 58) She argues that even though both sets of students are brown, Indian language influences racialization amongst diasporic communities. (Shankar, 2008)

This study is interesting in the sense that it reveals how the model minority thesis is related to language as well as race. Language, also an indicator of class status in this particular study as well as racial performativity, determines who can pass as a model minority and who cannot. Shankar’s ethnographic work, the multiple trajectories of identity that she investigates, as well and the historical patterns of immigration that she calls into question, give her work a kind of richness, complexity and attention that is necessary for education policy research. Still, if this study was approached differently, where language and class could not be conflated, one might find that it is not accent alone that determines who can pass and who can not, but that, as in other geographic

spaces, elite Indians regardless of accent carry privileges associated with class that are simply not there for working class South Asians, who, particularly during this third wave, speak both “marked” and “unmarked” English.

Sunaina Maira’s (2010) “Citizenship and Dissent: South Asian Muslim Youth in the US after 9/11” also draws on ethnographic research with high school students in New England to describe how students subjectively experience and resist, in often contradictory ways, their social location at the intersection of youth, citizenship and empire in the post 9/11 US (Maira, 2010). She describes their experiences as racialized subjects at school, not necessarily to make a comment on school outcomes, but to connect these experiences to a much wider political context, one that spans the globe and includes transnational networks of labor, power and migration. She calls her framework for analyzing youth, “youthscapes.” Maira’s (2010) work is perhaps one of the most insightful and comprehensive critical pieces I have found on South Asian youth in the sense that it connects the local experiences of class, identity and power with state level political and economic agendas and how these agendas pan out on a global stage. It takes both a microscopic view of individual students lives in schools, yet allows us to theorize what these experiences mean in a national and transnational context. It is only indirectly about schooling per se, and more about the students themselves, which only further lends to its legitimacy as a text that can be used for important educational policy making and research. (Maira, 2010)

The strength of the interdisciplinary research on South Asians that I have reviewed here, as opposed to the educational research, is that it troubles many of the

hegemonic discourses that stem from the dominating conservative and liberal traditions in education. (Darder, 2012) It troubles the model minority discourse not only in terms of revealing contradictions in its story of upward mobility for all Asians, but in the sense that it troubles who an “Asian” is, who isn’t an Asian, how this varies according to history and geographic location.

The ethnographic method in particular, along with the analysis of space and geographic patterns allows us to examine the lives of multiple generations of South Asians who are connected to families and social networks all around the world, and when studying South Asians it becomes easier to connect the dots between the local and the global in terms of situational variables, but also in terms of relationships with systems such as Neoliberalism, globalization, and empire. (Lugo, 2008)

Research on South Asians, by virtue of our particular history of racialization in the US, radically questions the usefulness of the black/ white binary, as well as the US/international binary. (Menon, 2006) The case of South Asians in the US is important in the sense that it troubles the category of “Asian” as well as of “American” and disrupts and brings out contradictions in the model minority discourse and the political and economic privilege it affords, particularly for the elite few in the US. The prevailing education research frameworks on South Asians, and I would argue race and racism broadly speaking, in the US simply do not address needs associated with our actual social positioning within US society.

The model minority discourse, as it has emerged in the context of the US, has ensured that any radicalism that does arise within the South Asians community, is

diffused projects of cultural celebration and performance. The stories, struggles of working class South Asians get lost, forgotten and silenced, particularly because the model minority image covers over actual hardships associated with the racist and patriarchal neoliberal capitalist system in the US. While the emergence of critical perspectives on South Asians in the US is promising and revealing, a more critical approach to looking at race and racism in US and schooling and society that goes beyond the conservative and liberal frameworks is not only theoretically necessary, but it is politically critical. Such a framework would be able to map power relations that occur within the US, even within the intimacy of one's own home, with power relations that are happening at the level of the "community," state, nation and world.

Conclusion: Introducing Wave Theory

Sridevi Menon (2006) in "Disrupting Asian America: South Asian American histories as Strategic Sites of Narration" contextualizes the example of South Asians in the US as a powerful example of the contradictions of racial classification and its impact on racial historiography in addition to the formation of racial solidarities and affiliations. She argues that South Asians occupy a precarious position within Asian America, and this marginal position allows us to not only identify colonizing discourses that emerge both in the mainstream and in the non white racialized margins of society, but that the status of South Asians within these discourses allows us to articulate an alternative history of anti-racist resistance from within the South Asian "community." She uses Spivak's concept of strategic essentialism to argue that South Asians have strategically

struggled for racial classification as Asian American in order to make demands of the state, but at the same time we occupy a position within Asian America and the US generally that troubles the process of racialization that occurs through this process of racial categorization. In terms of methodology, she argues that it is necessary to apply “colonial ethnography and historiography” that stretches across the US, UK and South Asia in order to understand racial formation in the US. Wave Theory, however, further argues that this history of anti-colonial and anti-racist resistance must be analyzed and narrated in relation to the history of neoliberal globalization, particularly if we are to rematerialize anti-racism in education and beyond (Melamed, 2011; Darder, 2012).

The educational research on South Asians in the US has yet to adequately theorize changing class, race and gender intersections both within the South Asian group and between racial groups. Much of the research still treats class, gender and race as mutually exclusive axes of power or undermines the complex subjectivities of working class South Asian youth in times of rapid and profound structural and cultural changes associated with globalization. Further, the transnational character of identity, class relations and social struggle in the US often gets lost when US South Asians are simply configured into US specific race, class and gender formations and analytical frameworks. In the next chapter I argue that a complex framework that draws on the analytical tools offered by theories of space and spatiality, cultural geography, global ethnography and historiography allows us to speak about identity, class and power relations in the US in ways that may be more timely and useful for educational policy research than prevailing conservative and prevailing paradigms used in US based

research institutions. Such a framework may better theoretically and analytically grapple with local, national and global transformations within a single racial group.

Wave theory draws on theories of materiality, the ethnographic method, space and spatiality, historiography and cultural geography in an interdisciplinary framework for mapping power relations and rematerializing anti-racist strategy in everyday life as well as well as the macro political context. (Melamed, 2011; Darder, 2012)

In essence, stories of working class and poor South Asians are the stories of all people of color whose pain and struggle for equality and freedom has been covered over by stories about race that effectively function in, not only silencing our voices as some may assert, but in further rationalizing and legitimizing the violence and exploitation we experience as physical bodies and as workers, whether paid or unpaid. The way education policy research approaches race, as an autonomous trajectory where one is at best “intersectional,” simply sidelines the foundational role that neoliberal globalization plays in structuring our experience and the exploitation of our bodies/labor as racialized and gendered subjects.

Pedagogically speaking, knowing our history and being able to articulate our histories, is an important part of understanding the life condition and moving it in a more positive direction (Friere, 2006; Darder, 2002). When we understand our history we can better understand why things are the way they are. This is true for peoples’ personal histories as well as for the histories of the social, political and economic context around us. This is true for the histories of South Asians as well as for the histories of other people of color and whites. Once we have a hypothesis for why things

might occur, then we can act on that hypothesis to create personal and social change and by way of doing this, see if our hypothesis was useful. We won't always be correct, but we never know unless we try and as time goes on our skills become stronger and we can refine our actions and thinking. (Friere, 1997)

As I have tried to show in this chapter, obtaining knowledge of history is no straightforward task, particularly when our histories in the US are narrated in accordance with conservative and liberal ideologies, such as the model minority thesis. (Darder, 2012) It isn't such that you can just open up a book, Google something, or even ask an 'expert,' and have the facts about something. In other words, we have to be extra careful, especially in the US (the heart of empire) that the history we are getting is indeed a history that reveals material contradictions. In the neoliberal US, there are constantly people, institutions and forces that are trying to lead youth in favor of particular conservative and/or liberal interests, and the public sector and education specifically, is a primary target for neoliberal reforms. Change is possible however, and ideally as youth grow up, and ironically, get out of conservative and liberal schools, they become better and wiser in deciphering these interests and understanding that the 'mainstream' is owned and operated by people who deploy particular sets of interests and values vis a vis social and cultural representations, such as the model minority. The important thing, pedagogically, is that we teach our students how to try and decode what these interests are, how to narrate their own histories, and how to have clarity, communicate honestly, and always in solidarity with others about their own particular

interests, as members of, or in solidarity with, the working class. (Friere, 1997, Darder, 2002) From there our students, whether South Asian or not, can choose how to act.

In the next chapter I outline the imperatives a Wave Theory. Wave Theory is an approach to educational policy research and analysis that attempts to subvert the problem of 'dematerializing' anti-racist initiatives in education which, as in the case of South Asians, distort the reality of our struggles and filter our radicalism into liberal and conservative projects of cultural performance and the tokenized celebration of diversity.

CHAPTER 5

WAVE THEORY

In this dissertation the example of Asians and South Asians was illustrated to map the mechanisms by which anti-racist analysis in education is becoming dematerialized. (Melamed, 2011) In this chapter I more deeply define the problem of materiality as it relates to the analysis of racial inequality in education. I argue that biological, cultural-psychological and cultural-sociological discourses in education attempt to materialize race on the one hand, by locating its origins in the respective domains, but effectively dematerialize race, by abstracting the analysis of race and racism from the analysis of neoliberal globalization. I develop this argument in the first section of this chapter by discussing the problem of materiality.

In the second part of this chapter I introduce Wave Theory. I am not asserting that Wave Theory is a “brand new” approach to educational policy research; researchers who have been linking the analysis of race with the analysis of capitalism for years influence it. Rather, Wave theory is like a quilt or patchwork reflection on what I have learned that represents my own summary of how the work of these thinkers can be mapped into a single analytical framework or approach for mapping anti-racism in education. In this way Wave Theory is actually an art, as in my patchwork description, and science, as in an emerging methodology that I would like to use in future ethnographic work in South Asian working class communities. Wave Theory is intended to be a social justice based intervention and response to the biological, cultural-sociological and cultural psychological approaches developed in chapters 3 and 4. Wave

theory is a patchwork description of a method for mapping trajectories of racial materiality that are consequential for education policy analysis and social movements against any form of inequality in education that has been inspired by researchers I have learned about and worked with over the past few years.

In this chapter then, Wave Theory is presented in three sections. The first section describes the analytical assumptions of Wave Theory, the second section describes Wave Theory as an ethnographic approach, and the third sections discusses the method for mapping trajectories of materiality using Wave Theory, specifically along the ideological, socio-political, and economic trajectories.

The Problem of Materiality

The analysis of materiality is the central tension that distinguishes contemporary theories of racial inequality. The definition of materiality, as in what counts as material, how it is material, what is not material, and what is the relationship between the two, is itself contested. In debates about race, class and gender, particularly those caught within Western binary logics and semiotic systems, vying for the status of material is important in the sense that its opposite, immaterial, implies a status of being lesser, inconsequential, unimportant, secondary, etc., in the hierarchical and binary evaluation of the utility of concepts.

In response to the biological determinism that dominated early anthropological treatments of race, where human genetic material was erroneously used to justify theories of racial difference under the guise of scientific objectivity, critical theories of difference emerged and generally all agree that race is, in the first right, a socially and

historically constructed and ideological phenomenon. Critical theories also agree that these identities are hierarchically ordered in society and are institutionalized via a series of processes of materialization. What the critical theories on race disagree about is how to define the materiality of race, how to identify its forms, and how to map these processes of materialization.

For example, some contemporary critical theories attempt to reclaim the discourse of biological difference in the defense of antiracism. Biological theories focus on the body, phenotype and skin to argue that since bodies are material, and since bodies exist with phenotypic differences, that race is material and that we should not reduce the role that biology plays in situations (Saldanha, 2006).

For example, Saldanha (2006) makes an argument for the material significance of skin color in the daily experiences of people of color. He argues that “we cannot ignore the real, tangible differences between bodies that matter in face-to-face encounters. “(Saldanha, 2006, p. 14) In the context of his article which critiques the ‘epistemological biases’ of post structural thought, he formulates his argument in effort to refute the position that race is a purely discursive and ideological construct that is reified in societies that give the construct purchase. (Saldanha, 2006)

Fanon (1952) makes a similar argument along the cultural-psychological terrain when he describes the impact of being ‘caught’ in the gaze of the white eye and the development of third person consciousness: “when the Negro makes contact with the white world, a certain sensitizing action takes place. If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an actional person. The

goal of his behavior will be The Other (in the guise of the white man) for The Other alone can give him worth.” (Fanon, 1952, p. 154)

Cultural - psychological theories argue that race is principally an ideological phenomenon that has historically evolved to become a material phenomenon which is voluntarily ascribed onto the body (Mills, 2010). In addition to analyzing race as a social, economic and political materiality that is socially and historically emergent and institutionalized these theories ascribe to race an additional cultural -psychological trajectory that operates under the surface of individual human consciousness at an “unconscious” level. The experience of racial domination and subordination, become internal, as if tattooed onto the psyche without the possibility of removal (Mills, 2010). This definition of materiality is different from the biological treatment in that it does not technically treat race, or in this case race consciousness, as a biologically and genetically inherited trait that accounts for difference and it does not necessarily attempt to reclaim Darwinian theories of race. Rather it treats race as an historically emergent phenomenon that comes to materialize in and on the body, almost as a cancer that develops over the span of childhood through adulthood. (Mills, 2010; Fanon, 1956; Saldanha, 2006)

Other approaches to race, such as Omi and Winant’s Racial Formation Theory and Derrick Bell’s Racial Realism, belong to a cultural – sociological tradition. (Bell, 1992; Omi and Winant, 1994) In these theories, race is recognized, in the first instance as a social construction and ideology. The materialization of race occurs within racialized social practices and structures. These positions do not, in the first right, argue for a

biological or even a psychological basis for making arguments about the materiality of race. Rather they argue that the materiality, the realness of race, has to be mapped in relation to how it operates as a real way of structuring societies and relationships between the micro individual level of society and the macro structural level (Omi & Winant, 1994). These theories suggest that political projects are in the first right, racial projects, and that race and racism can be viewed as “an autonomous field of social conflict, political organizations, and cultural/ideological meaning” (Omi and Winant, 1994; Bonilla Silva, 1996). Within these theories, race and racism are immanent and immutable social materialities. Consider the following:

Black people will never gain full equality in this country. Even those Herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary ‘peaks of progress,’ short lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. This is a hard-to-accept fact that all history verifies. We must acknowledge it and move on to adopt policies based on what I call “Racial Realism.” This mind-set or philosophy requires us to acknowledge the permanence of our subordinate status. That acknowledgement enables us to avoid despair and frees us to imagine and implement racial strategies that can bring fulfillment and even triumph. (Bell, 1992, pg. 373-374)

In these analyses, consciousness as well as social structures, such as the law, are material determinants of racism and racial relations. These interpretations argue that race and racism are immutable and immanent realities and that clear lines exist between whites and non whites defined by ways of visualizing race, ways of

experiencing race and life in general, and ways of benefiting – economically, socially, politically and psychologically – in racially structured societies (Bonilla Silva, 1996).

It is fair to say that within the academic canon these theories of the materiality of race, along biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological lines, are largely responding to and critique three approaches to race and addressing racism.

First, what they would describe as a characteristic post structural reduction of race to the status of discursive and representational and thus immaterial in a material/immaterial binary where immaterial necessarily means less important and in some cases, inconsequential. This is seen as an attempt to transcend the real politics of race and racism. So the search for a ground on which to locate race and racism, vis a vis biological, cultural psychological and cultural sociological theories, and assert its tangible and material “realness,” is a strategic effort to reground thinking about race and racism in the material. The problem here is that this is itself a reduction of post-structural approaches to race and racism which actually exposes both is socially constructed characteristic on the ideological trajectory and its material reality with the “situated” political and economic trajectories. (Haraway, 1991)

The second, is a perceived reductionism within neo-Marxist discourses on race and class where race is second to class politics in any and every given situation. The idea here is that neo-Marxist analysis reduces race to the status of ideological, or secondary at best, and gives primacy to the class structure of society. This again, is a simplification of neo-Marxist analyses, the kind of simplification that, as Stuart Hall notes, led Marx himself to say: “if that is Marxism, then I am not a Marxist.” (Hall, 1986, p. 10) Marxists

argue that ideology (i.e. race) and structure (i.e. institutions organized in the mode of production) must be analyzed in *dialectical* relationship (as opposed to a hierarchical), that one cannot be understood without an analysis of the other. (Hall, 1986; Hall, 1980)

This is much different from the simplistic interpretation that Marxists, clumped together, are arguing that class trumps race. Like the critiques of post structuralism then, the suggestion that Marxists argue that race is ideological and that must mean that Marxists think that race is not material (read: as important to understand and analyze as race and racism) is also false and stuck within the binary logic system of material/immaterial (read: inconsequential), as opposed to a dialectical logic that allows for historical and spatial variance, as well as variance by level of analysis, for example micro versus macro.

The third, is the scientific racism of the biological theories that dominated 18th and 19th century discourses on race which also operated in a material and immaterial binary where scientific knowledge, the only true knowledge, was privileged.

On the policy terrain, these cultural theories of race are responding to the real threat of color blind and race neutral theories on the one hand, and racial eugenics on the other hand, by defining race as an historically emergent materiality, or phenotypic materiality, which marks the body without the possibility of removal. The idea is that leaving open the question of biological origins cedes ground to contemporary eugenicists and therefore a material analysis of the body, which is grounded in the materiality of skin color and phenotype, is strategically necessary. (Mills, 2010) Further, the fear is that arguing that race is not material, in the first right, further ceded ground

to proponents of 'color blind' and 'race neutral' policies. In this way, the push to 'materialize race' is largely reactionary and strategic, as well as a legitimate subjective experience that speaks to the severe impacts of colonialism.

These theories of race then, though very different, belong along a spectrum of theories of race and racism that are characterized by three similar assumptions. The first is that race and racism are autonomous material trajectories where "classism," sexism, homophobia, linguicism and the other "isms" are also autonomous material trajectories that interact with racism at key nodal points which make up the space of intersectionality. The second is that race and racism is as much a power struggle between cultures and races, conceptualized as distinguishable social collectivities (i.e. either through race, social affiliation, phenotype, etc.), as it is a struggle over material resources. The third is that race and racism are immutable and immanent social realities in societies structured by race such as the US.

While these are powerful critiques of the politics of race and racism, that give us valuable insights into how race and racism are experienced, they simply do not go far enough in capturing the materiality of race and effectively dematerialize anti-racism. I argue that detaching analyses of racism from the structural foundations of neoliberal globalization may allow more people of color access to the things that white people have historically kept from us, however, by delinking from the analysis of neoliberal globalization, these analyses come policy orientations have dematerialized anti-racism, increased racial inequality and the material deprivation of the majority of the worlds people of color and poorest people, and, sabotaged social movements that materially

challenge the structural foundations that allow the type of brutality that is racism to continue. (Melamed, 2011; Darder & Torres, 2004) To develop this argument, I will address each of the trends, biological, cultural-psychological and cultural-sociological separately.

In terms of contemporary biological approaches to anti-racism, by focusing on skin color, phenotype, etc. these lines of analysis tend to objectify the skin and then leave the skin, and its inhabitants, vulnerable to forms of commodity fetishism vis a vis Multicultural Neoliberalism (Battacharya, 1998; Melamed, 2011). Any critique of racism based on skin color, must be tied to a continuous critique of neoliberal processes of globalization or else these theories will, and indeed do, effectively render race and skin as a commodity to be consumed. While the experiences that these writers acknowledge so powerfully in their research - the subjective experience of racism, its inescapability as a social phenomenon that has “leveling power” simply through the act of the gaze – is a valid identification of phenomena. (Saldanha, 2006; Fanon, 1956; Bell, 1992; Mills, 2010) The contradiction is that theorizing the materiality of skin and phenotype or even the materiality of colorblind and race neutral policies, apart from the materiality of neoliberal globalization, is precisely a technology of racism and neoliberal globalization, that has been realized in its most potent form in the recent period of neoliberal multiculturalism (Melamed, 2011; Battacharya, 1998).

I am not arguing that epidermal politics are not significant trajectories that warrant analysis, the politics of skin and color have and remain, still, fundamentally inscribed into the institutional politics of colonialism and remain so in the current neo-

colonial phase. (Saldanha, 2006) Nor am I arguing that the study of state and local level color blind and race neutral policies is secondary to the analytics of neoliberal globalization. I argue however that it is the institutional framework itself that is material, as opposed to the colonial signification of dark skin, and further that state and local level regimes must be analyzed in dialectical relationship to neoliberal globalization (Hall, 1986; Kamat, 2011). I am further arguing that an analysis of the representational politics of dark skin must be developed in relationship to skin as a fetishized commodity and the processes of neoliberal capitalism.

Second, we need an argument for the materiality of skin that recognizes this historical unevenness and its salience in specific, located, contexts. This is not in effort to argue that racism is less pervasive now, than it has been in the past. In fact, it is an argument that under neoliberal globalization the potential to exploit people of color because of our skin color has been actualized to an unprecedented degree because of the delinking of analysis of anti-racism from anti-neoliberal globalization. (Battacharya, 1998; Melamed, 2011)

In terms of cultural-psychological approaches to anti-racism, if the point of racism is so that one person or a group of people, such as whites, can feel superior to a group of other people such as Asians, even if its just a psychological benefit, this is still an example of how value is extracted from one human being to bring benefits to another human being and this kind of value can only be extracted in a context where race is reified on the cultural terrain and where this is dialectically related to the commodification of skin on the economic terrain. If racism is a means and an end,

where racism is autonomous from other systems of exploitation, this implies that human nature is one that tends towards dominance. I reject this gendered presumption completely.

Rather, I ask, when and where and by what externally located mechanism did this ability to obtain pleasure or satisfaction from another persons suffering emerge within the context of human culture and what was the context? (Battacharya, 1998) In Wave Theory the answer lies in the invention of capitalism, an externally imparted social system that made these kinds of ruthless subject positions available. Capitalism is a system that is presupposed on the objectification and abuse and exploitation of all material and forms of life. Racism is a technology of capitalism. This is not an argument for an idealized past, nor am I arguing that the ability to objectify, abuse and exploit did not emerge before capitalism, however, in the current neoliberal context, the pervasiveness of racist capitalism and capitalist racisms' reach is undeniable. Reifying the 'materiality' of race along the trajectory of psychology or a system where racism is, in itself, a means to an end effectively dematerializes race and racism, and covers over critical contradictions in race relations and the dynamics of racism, when this analysis is not made in conjunction with a sustained critique of capitalism. Fanon himself insisted "The habit of considering racism as a mental quirk, as a psychological flaw, must be abandoned." (Fanon, 1957, pg. 77)

Cultural sociological approaches to anti-racism, such as those emerging within critical race studies and racial formation theory, end up only partially exposing the extent of racism and racial exploitation. Racism is undeniably real, and the process of

en-racing and exploiting is a fundamental component of capitalism, but the character and salience of racisms in relation to other trajectories of power is variable with time and space.

Again, this is not an argument for the decreasing significance of racial difference, rather it is an argument that racism has perhaps reached its highest potential under neoliberal globalization and the regime of neoliberal multiculturalism. (Melamed, 2011)

It is true that colonialism in the US and slavery in the US are “officially” over and the kind of violence, such as mass lynchings of African and Native Americans, are also not as common as they were during the times of slavery. This does not mean that the politics of exploitation and death have not simply been continued in other forms and institutionalized in other ways, and even worse, under the guise of colorblindness and discourse of social justice.

Most importantly, these theories do not allow for the possibility for achieving a true racial democracy - outside of the realm of subjectivity or psychological liberations - which effectively renders our efforts towards social change, social justice and economic and political revolution null and void.

A dual critique of the prevailing biological, sociological – cultural, and psychological - cultural paradigms in education and beyond is in order. On the one hand, race is a socially and historically constructed, ideological phenomenon. Biological and cultural frameworks assign a material value to phenomena, such as race and gender, which are in the first right, ideological and historically and socially constructed. This is done through research that is based on positivistic, formalist, subjective-psychological

and idealistic approaches and research methods (Voloshinov, 1973). On the political terrain, by treating race and gender as material phenomena, these approaches tend to essentialize social identities, blame the victim, reify the racism and patriarchy that they may (or may not) intend to critique, and ultimately uphold the status quo and/or exacerbate hierarchical divides. On the other hand, race becomes material when, as an ideological phenomenon, it systematically influences human action, policies, social structures, and under the course of this influence becomes a dialectically emergent, structural phenomena vis a vis processes of institutionalization that operate even at the micro structural, intimate and discursive levels. This occurs in geographically specific spaces where discourses about racial essentialism, such as those espoused within the cultural and biological approaches (including the “critical” ones), have purchase. This is not an argument for colorblind or race neutral approaches to addressing racial inequality. It is an analytical point towards the mapping of trajectories of materiality that result in racialized, exploitative violence and abuse as well as the mapping of material-ideological trajectories of race, gender and other hierarchical ideological relations that serve a hegemonic function for this exploitation.

In sum then, the problem of materiality is that in a struggle to render race and racism a socially significant variable in our analyses of inequality in an educational context that is increasingly threatened by colorblind and race neutral policies and Eugenicist agendas, it is accorded the status of material either - biologically, psychologically and/or socially - in effort to save it from being rendered immaterial and thus inconsequential and/or to determine the terms upon which it is defined as a

biological materialism. The problem of materiality is that in an effort to assert the significance and materiality of race these theories effectively de-materialize race and anti-racism. In what follows I suggest a method for mapping out trajectories of the materiality of race and racism that moves us forward and away from being vulnerable to scientific racism and colorblind and race neutral policies in education. (Melamed, 2011; Darder & Torres, 2004)

Theoretical Foundations of Wave Theory

A social justice based intervention in debates about how to conceptualize and map the materiality of race and racism, Wave Theory has five primary tenets. The first is that racism in the US must be conceptualized in terms of both the 'wide view' of neoliberal globalization and the 'long view' of colonialism. (Hall, 1986; Lugo, 2008; Kamat, 2004) The second is that educational policy analysis must take an interdisciplinary approach that particularly draws on ethnographic methods, historiography, race and gender studies, analysis of space and spatiality, political geography, and theories of materiality in addition to education studies to emphasize the mapping and analysis of contradictions in studies of race and racism. The third, race and racism must be rematerialized by analyses that are grounded in a theorization of all of the ideological, socio-political and economic trajectories and their non-reductive relationship. (Hall, 1986; Foucault, 1980; Melamed, 2011) The fourth, the everyday experiences of racism must be theorized, with semi-autonomy, in relation to the macro structural processes of neoliberal globalization along these three trajectories. (Hall,

1986) The fifth, is that having mapped the trajectories of materiality, educational policy researchers must take a position, demand accountability, and work in solidarity with the relevant social movement(s) that foreground the voices and material struggles of those who are the most exploited in any given context. (Friere, 2006; Darder, 2002) I will discuss each of these tenets separately and in more detail here.

(1) Racism in the US must be conceptualized in terms of the historical and contemporary politico-spatial logics of neoliberal globalization, colonialism and the state.

Wave Theory does not set out to empirically map and describe the totality of social and economic relations and assumes that all knowledge is 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1991, p. 189). As a social justice based model for addressing the issue of racial inequality however, some political description of ideological, socio-political and economic relations is in order to provide a kind of roadmap for policy research, social activism and social action. Even though any such description would necessarily be imperfect and is open to debate.

Wave Theory argues that globalization does not create a communitarian, multicultural, global village, or collapse and homogenize identity and power relations. Following others, it argues that inequality through race, class, sexuality, gender, citizenship and other hierarchical identities, the inequality exercised through difference by the state and range of hierarchically organized social actors down to the individual, are only exacerbated. (Kamat, 2011; Malamed, 2011; Brenner, 2010) Wave theory argues that the logics of inequality in contemporary societies operate under historically

emergent, counterintuitive and contradictory logics that are difficult to grasp if our way of seeing or theorizing social relations relies on the dominant US nation centric and liberal approaches to for analyzing hierarchical politics in the US.

Globalization is not necessarily new, though there are new and distinguishing features in the international division of labor marked by the recent Neoliberal phase that warrant a description of new politics of identity and culture (Hall, 1991). Neoliberal globalization operates through difference and under the post-Fordist logics there is a 'proliferation of difference' that manifests vis a vis the politics of infinite consumption and the 'new exotica' (Hall, 1991, pg. 31; Battacharya, 1998). There is no longer a reliance on the nation state as a point of reference for the construction of identities including whiteness power relations are exercised through difference and have been 'proliferated' from the nation state to accommodate difference while still reifying hierarchical and historical national, race, class, gender and sexual relations (Hall, 1991). Hall (1991) reminds us that we are only beginning to understand the cultural politics of globalization but that these new forms are also a continuation of the old and a set of analytics that will also help us understand the old in new terms. (Hall, 1991)

Neoliberalism deploys the discourse of social justice, democracy, racial justice in order to de-center the state, re-center individuals and create new opportunities for accumulation under neoliberal multiculturalism (Kamat, 2011; Melamed, 2011; Darder, 2012). Schooling and education are potentially, radically transformative institutions, but are overwhelmingly colonial institutions designed to reproduce the state mode of production and teach the hegemonic myths that serve global capitalism (Stoller, 2002;

Wright, 2002). In other words, particularly against biological, cultural-psychological and cultural sociological approaches to addressing the problem of racial inequality, Wave Theory argues that any productive analysis of racial inequality in education, must be understood in dialectical relationship to a critique of neoliberal globalization and critique of the post/neocolonial state form (Kamat, 2011).

Against descriptions of neoliberal globalization as a sweeping force that is slowly eroding the power of the state as an arbiter of the direction of domestic and international political and economic development, Wave Theory argues that under Neoliberalism the state is further strengthening its role as the primary authority for organizing space by deploying the logics of colonialism and its racist legacy under the banner and discourse of democracy (Brenner & Theodore, 2010; Kamat, 2011; Melamed, 2011). This process effectively de-materializes race and racism, while giving the illusion of democracy but actually exacerbating racial divides on a US national and global scale. Wave Theory maps out the way that neoliberal globalization is articulating with post colonial histories as trajectories of materiality (Kamat, 2004; Lugo, 2008). Finally, Wave Theory argues that the State is an autonomous actor that can and must be held accountable for racial inequality, along with those who benefit and exploit the labor of others along every level of social organization down to the level of intimate and personal relationships. (Kamat, 2004; Lipman 2011; Brenner, 1999)

(2) Educational policy analysis must take an interdisciplinary approach that integrates ethnographic methods, historiography, race and gender studies, analysis of space and spatiality, political geography, and theories of materiality to emphasize the mapping and analysis of contradictions in studies of race and racism

Wave Theory is the assertion that educational policy research is best conducted with frameworks that emphasize difference and historical contradiction, as opposed to continuity and similarity. The analysis of contradiction and specificity is politically necessary, but largely not present with the biological, cultural –psychological and cultural – sociological approaches. It is present, however, in the interdisciplinary methodologies deployed by education researchers who are analyzing race, gender, education policy and neoliberal globalization in its various, “actually existing” manifestations (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Kamat, 2011; Lipman, 2011; Pedroni, 2011; Darder, 2012).

Methodologically wave theory uses interdisciplinary tools - critical theories of materiality, methods of ethnography and historiography, analyses of space and spatiality and the study of political and cultural geography - to map contemporary trajectories of materiality that identify specific, “actually existing” instantiations, of the relationship between neoliberal globalization, colonialism, the State, hierarchical actors and education (Kamat, 2011; Brenner, 2002). The maps of specific instantiations of materiality are then filtered into a social justice based pedagogical and political strategy against state sponsored neoliberal globalization. (Friere, 2006)

In terms of contradictions that occur at the every day level, wave theory locates the subject within her or his social context, and looks to the analysis of this social context for the material causes of educational inequality, as opposed to looking at

biology, cultural-psychological or cultural – sociological group “behaviors”. However Wave Theory is not a theory that silences the subject or denies the subject agency. In terms of the question of agency and subjectivity, Wave Theory accepts the limitations of all possible knowledge, and it looks to the social context to identify the subject positions that are available to the subject in a context that is largely – though incompletely - defined by the struggle between neoliberal globalization and resistance along multiple trajectories of power (Pedroni, 2006, Haraway, 1991).

In terms of contradictions that occur at the macro structural level, Wave Theory maps the way that race, racism and anti-racism are instantiated in external social structures, such as borders, schools, the organization of state space, in order to map the strategies through which colonial relations and legacies are maintained, even under the guise of colorblind and even ‘social justice’ based discourses. (Lugo, 2008; Brenner, 1999)

(3) Race and racism must be rematerialized by analyses that are grounded in a theorization and analysis of all of the ideological, political and economic trajectories within the structural frameworks of neoliberal globalization and neocolonialism.

Neoliberal globalization represents a significant turn in the post-colonial history of events that requires a new analysis of the way the power and capital are reorganizing according to different spatial logics. (Hall, 1991) There are different energies and speeds at which history is happening and analytically, it is important for us to start with distinguishing the material from the ideological, and then defining and specifying the material in its various forms and goals. Drawing largely on Michel Foucault's (1980) discourse on power and his genealogical method, I will offer a description of the basic

material forms that are analytically relevant for any conceptualization of the determinants of educational inequality. (Foucault, 1980)

The forms of materiality that are consequential for the analysis of educational policy include those forms that bear relevance to the way that force relations are strategically networked within any given society from the level of the individual through to the level of macro political social structures, policies and institutions. (Foucault, 1980) Further, forms of materiality relevant for policy analysis include ideological forms that become material through their signification in discourse (i.e. words) and signs.

(Voloshinov, 1973) The analysis of forms of materiality is two fold then. On the one hand forms include the analysis of complex networks of institutions and practices along the economic and socio-political trajectories from the macro to the micro, and on the other hand it includes the analysis of ideology, or the discursive and visual sign, also as it develops along the macro and the micro, and finally it includes some non-reductive and context specific theorization of the relationship between these three trajectories.

Importantly, ideology, like 'culture' is not material in and of itself, rather it is materialized vis a vis the impact it has on human actions (i.e. the agency of people within their 'spheres of influence'). The theory of the materiality of ideology then, like the theory of the materiality of race and racism, must not be disconnected from this crucial process of variable materialization along the economic and socio-political trajectories else it will fall into the traps of the biological, cultural psychological and cultural sociological approaches. (Hall, 1986; Voloshinov, 1973) The specific forms of

materiality that are consequential for an analysis of racial inequality in education are context specific and variable

(4) The everyday experiences of race and racism must be theorized, with semi-autonomy, in relation to the macro-structural processes of neoliberal globalization and post colonialism along the three trajectories.

A further level of explication is in order. The strength of the cultural approaches to addressing the problem of racial inequality, albeit not in the approach, is in the concern with addressing problems of inequality and injustice as they reproduce at the level of everyday social interactions and social problems at the micro, personal and individual level of analysis. While Wave Theory as a methodology for doing educational policy research on racial inequality seeks to describe the articulation of Neoliberalism with already existing racial and gendered hierarchies and histories of racist exploitation, it seeks to describe how these existing histories of racial inequality are incorporated into processes of neoliberalization in order to both maximize racist exploitation for accumulationist ends, while at the same time, creating subjective positions that ahistoricize and depoliticize Neoliberalism. (Pedroni, 2006) Wave Theory argues that exploitation at the level of the state trickles down to the level of individuals and communities. In order to produce the data for the analysis of Neoliberalism and racial inequality in education, even at the micro level, Wave Theory as methodology draws on ethnography and historiography to both uncover the localization of processes of neoliberalisation, as well as the subjective positions that come available under the localized logics of neoliberal globalization. (Pedroni, 2006)

(5) Educational policy research must demand accountability and foreground the voices and demands of those who are the most exploited in any given context.

Wave Theory is a social justice based intervention in educational policy debates. Following Donna Haraway (1991), Stuart Hall (1986) and Paulo Friere (2006) Wave Theory draws on dialectical, reflexive, contingent, positioned, situated, embodied, partial accountings of knowledge which are, as such, empirical and objective and able to be held accountable. (Haraway, 1991; Hall, 1986; Friere, 2006)

In the words of Donna Haraway (1991), “our problem is how to have simultaneously an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own ‘semiotic technologies’ for making meanings, and a no nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of the real world, one that can be partially shared and friendly to earth wide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness.” (Haraway, 1991, pg. 187) To address the problem of the dematerialization of race, the answer according to Haraway (1991) is “partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations on epistemology.” (Haraway, 1991, pg. 191)

The analysis of ‘locatable’ and ‘situated’ knowledge is echoed in Hall’s (1986) analysis of Gramsci. He states, “he (Gramsci) recognizes the ‘plurality’ of selves or identities of which the so called ‘subject’ of thought and ideas is composed. He argues that this multifaceted nature or consciousness is not an individual but a collective phenomenon, a consequence of the relationship between ‘the self’ and the ideological discourses which compose the cultural terrain of a society.” (Hall, 1986, pg. 22) Both

Haraway (1991) and Gramsci, vis a vis Hall (1986), argue here for a recounting of power, politics that springs up from the subjected situated on a particular historically, located environment that is characterized, however dynamically, by collective phenomena that bear relevance to political struggle and social justice.

To address the problem of structural approaches to scientific objectivity, for Haraway (1991), “science becomes the myth not of what escapes human agency and responsibility in a realm above the fray, but rather of accountability and responsibility for translations and solidarities linking the cacophonous visions and visionary voices that characterize the knowledges of the subjugated.” (Haraway, 1991, pg. 196) Likewise, Stuart Hall (1986) notes that Gramsci provided “a sustained assault on the epistemologies of economism, positivism and the spurious search for scientific guarantees” (Hall, 1986, pg. 12) Further, “he draws attention to the given and determinate character of that terrain, and the complexity of the processes of de-construction and re-construction by which old alignments are dismantled and new alignments effected between elements in different discourses and between social forces and ideas. It conceives ideological change, not in terms of substitution or imposition but rather in terms of the articulation and the disarticulation of ideas.” (Hall, 1986, p. 24)

For Gramsci, via Hall (1986), it is important to uncover the many determinations that impact social relations that can either obstruct or create social justice. Similarly, for Haraway (1991), the ideal subject for making knowledge claims are those that exist on the subjugated peripheries. It is not that these subject positions are not contradictory and disinterested, but “they are preferred because in principle they are least likely to

allow denial of the critical and interpretive core of all knowledge. They are savvy to modes of denial through repression forgetting and disappearing acts – ways of being nowhere while claiming to see comprehensively.” (Haraway, 1991, pg. 191) Haraway (1991) offers here a non-essentialist and relational conceptualization of identity and points us toward the historically specific, “situated knowledge” that is at once embodied and also historical. (Haraway, 1991)

That being said, Wave Theory as a social justice based intervention in debates about culture and structure draws on the ethnographic method, that deploys analyses of space and spatiality, cultural geography, historiography and trajectories of materiality, in effort to forefront narratives about the lives of those who are the most subjugated in any given society and who have lost the most, and have the most to lose, in the colonial logics of neoliberal globalization. Any narrativization of power is deemed to be only a partial narrativization, and in its partiality, ‘objective’ (honest) accounts of life are drawn. Through mapping the “webbed connections” within stories and between stories the networks of forms of materiality, or the ‘many determinations’ can be mapped to create a larger picture that will allow us to uncover the material and relational (as in political, economic and ideological) terms upon which power is claimed and exercised in a time of rapid movement and change associated with the logics of neoliberal globalization. (Hall, 1986; Haraway, 1991).

Wave Theory as an Ethnographic Method

Neoliberal globalization is a relatively new political, social and economic condition where two path dependent instantiations of power and exploitation located across geographic spaces, within and between national contexts, can prove completely contradictory. Further, understanding neoliberal globalization requires the application and construction of new analytical concepts and tools. (Hall, 1991) For example, social media technologies are profoundly impacting education, vis a vis the 'new exotica' and multicultural Neoliberalism, and require new concepts that allow us to map new 'levels of determination' in addition to those that have historically and fundamentally characterized the pattern of racial capitalism and neo-colonialism in the US. (Melamed, 2011; Hall, 1991)

In order to account for this increasingly contradictory global ideological, socio-political and economic landscape, and to produce data for path dependent analyses of Neoliberalism and racial inequality, Wave Theory 'maps' of materiality are largely grounded in ethnographic analyses in order to unearth those processes which bear relevance to educational policy analysis, but which are largely taken for granted in prevailing educational policy research approaches including the biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological approaches. (Brenner, 2002)

It is not the task of Wave Theory then, to apply a formulaic or grid for analyzing the way that social identity and power are organized in relation to the processes that define neoliberal globalization, because politics at the local level consist of many locally situated determinations and also because mapping trajectories of materiality is a

process based on situated knowledges (Hall, 1986; Haraway, 1991). Here, following the work of Stuart Hall (1986), I suggest a set of guidelines for mapping trajectories of materiality, a generalized map, for beginning the analysis of these relations as they occur in variable and variegating contexts that are ultimately a point and purview in processes of neoliberal globalization. First however, I will offer my justification for Wave Theory as an ethnographic method for doing policy research.

Donna Haraway (1991) calls for mapping an “earth-wide network of connections, including the ability partially to translate knowledge’s among very different – and power differentiated – communities.” (Haraway, 1991, pg. 187) She argues for a social constructionist approach to identity “not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to living in meanings and bodies that have a chance for a future.” (Haraway, 1991, pg. 187) Haraway suggest a mapping of materiality that takes as its starting point the situated and bodily apparatus of vision. This locating of the maps of materiality makes us accountable for that way we represent reality and for the way we map reality and, therefore, doesn’t deny the political act of mapping trajectories of materiality. These trajectories will be inevitably mapped in accordance with the biases of the observer, as opposed to a vision from nowhere based objectivity. Mapping trajectories of materiality then is mapping what we learn how to see and how we’ve learned how to organize the world. (Haraway, 1991) The method for mapping trajectories then, according to Haraway (1991), “privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connection, and hope for transformation of systems. (Haraway, 1991, pg. 191-192)

Haraway (1991) emphasizes the role of the ethnographer in ethnography and argues that 21st century ethnography must take into account multiple ways of knowing that are embodied in local time space relations and constitute the relationship between partial, fragmented knowledge and the whole. It is the negotiation of partial and whole as socially constructed knowledges located in local space, as opposed to objective relations, that is important in ethnography. In other words Haraway (1991) brings up the important point that ethnography is inherently political writing. Importantly, there must be reflexivity in the method concerning both the ethnographers and the subjects' own ways of knowing and seeing so as not to reaffirm the objectivity of science/ethnographer myth. (Haraway, 1991)

Wave Theory relies on those ethnographic methods that map the relationship between the local and the global, the micro and the macro, the historical and contemporary, and in a multi-sited approach to ethnography, as opposed to approaches bound within traditional conceptions of space, place and territory. (Burawoy et al, 2000)

The strength of this method is that it allows us to look at the everyday experience and subjective experience of globalization and race, giving analyses of globalization a human face, as opposed to fixing analyses of globalization in the abstract or macro structural realm. Further it allows us to describe globalization as a non-neutral embodiment of forces, as connections between localities, and as cultural imaginations that are bound up in multilayered structural and systemic processes as they articulate with the local and within the realm of subjectivity (Burawoy et al, 2000). Wave Theory as ethnography offers a complex analytics of globalization with the benefits of

ethnography that allows one to understand processes from the perspective of people living the interstices of globalization and as dynamic as opposed to static and bounded. Further, this approach does not de-contextualize hybridity to the detriment of politics and is grounded in place based understandings of globalization (Lugo, 2008).

In their critique of classical anthropology Gupta and Ferguson (1992) suggest we expand prevailing ethnographic definitions of the field to include shifting notions and relationships between space, place, culture and identity that are not nation or territorially bound in the classical or traditional sense. Rather, ethnography must trouble relations between the local, national and global and particularly if it envisions itself as a decolonizing, as opposed to recolonizing, method of inquiry and social description for the 21st century. (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992)

Scott's (1998) approach to ethnography critiques the rise and role of the modern nation state, its organization and conceptualization of state space and territory, its legitimization function vis a vis culture and society, and relations between civil society and the State form. He argues that ethnographic approaches to historiography are antithetical to the State centered approach in that they emphasize local relations, local knowledge, diverse social identity groups, and local contradictions and complexity as they exists in relation to the state form. (Scott, 1998)

Comoroff and Comoroff (1992) offer an argument for the necessity of considering ethnography in the context of bottom up histories. These are accounts in which power and class formations in a historical trajectory or periodization are used to contextualize ethnography to create even more understanding and transparency and

make the ethnographer's political project more transparent. For them, like Haraway (1991), ethnography is inherently political and historiography allows for a much needed, however non-neutral, point of reference in ethnographic research. (Comoroff & Comoroff, 1992)

In his book *Fragmented Lives: Assembled Parts*, Alejandro Lugo (2008) analytically does in the context of Ciudad Juarez, what I would like to see Wave Theory do in the context of education. Lugo (2008) is able to take the analysis of contemporary Ciudad Juarez and map how State and multinational corporate power are inscribed onto the everyday experiences of the working class. Even more, he is able to simultaneously map processes of colonialism and conquest onto this experience. Even though Lugo is not trying to map "the truth" his work is a strong example of how the macro can be mapped onto the micro in a framework that does not compromise the ethical and moral clarity that is essential for social justice based research. Likewise, Wave Theory, while holding on to the emancipatory potential of education, is intended to approach schools as zones of oppression, where particularly working class kids of color are governed, surveilled, punished, and tracked into life trajectories that are intended to, in the most dehumanizing ways, bolster the project of empire. This approach delegitimizes the belief that schools are actually places where children are educated as free subjects in a democracy, just as Lugo's work delegitimizes the belief that border is actually a place that is regulated by any sense of justice.

Method for Mapping Materiality

Wave Theory deploys ethnography to map the materiality of race along political, economic and ideological trajectories that occur in time – space specific contexts. The materiality of race and racism are mapped via networks that reveal relationships between the level of the individual through to the level of the State. Wave Theory argues that the analysis of ‘relations of force’ found within this entire network are relevant for the construction of educational policy, pedagogy, curriculum and practice. Wave Theory argues that while these three trajectories are relatively autonomous, and do not exist in a relationship where one can draw conclusions about one trajectory based on an analysis of the other, they must be articulated into a coherent analysis upon which political decisions, that move society in the direction of social justice can be made. Wave Theory maps materiality along three trajectories: the ideological, the socio-political and the economic. (Lugo, 2008) Here I will address the method for mapping each trajectory separately.

Ideological Trajectory

In contrast to the biological and cultural theories of race and racism, Wave Theory does not claim to map processes that occur inside the human brain, nor does it claim that any phenomena that is principally ideological, like racism, is a spatio-temporal and historical constant. Following Voloshinov (1973), Wave Theory argues that the study of psychology is effectively the study of ideology and the study of ideology is the study of the sign. Therefore, Wave Theory effectively externalizes the study of racism reflecting its reality in historically emergent, social phenomena, as opposed to a reality

that is conceptualized as a biological, cultural-psychological or cultural-sociological essentialism. (Voloshinov, 1973)

The materiality of the sign, and the materiality of racism, exists in the way that colonial racial discourses continue to be effectively used to justify the institutionalization of hierarchies that are fundamentally designed to exploit the labor of non-white racialized people (Razack, 2002). The measure of the materiality of the sign however, must be assessed in relation to an analysis of the socio-political and economic trajectories of materiality. Wave Theory then is an argument for the materiality of racial signification *in relation* to the materiality of the racial relations of force that are structured into societies through institutions, practices and policy and economic regimes. (Hall, 1986)

Race becomes an analytically material form in societies in accordance with the way that race is given purchase as a concept in and of itself. By giving purchase to conceptions of race - abstracted from its material forms which are historically emergent and spatio-temporally uneven biological and cultural theories only perpetuate the racism which they intend to critique. Material linguistic systems and representations – the word and/or the sign - do not have meaning in and of themselves. Rather, meaning is socially assigned to them and based on those prevailing ideologies that serve a hegemonic function or a resistant function for the relations of production that exist in said society. (Voloshinov, 1973; Fiske, 2011)

It is therefore critical to study ideology vis a vis discourse and visual analysis in tandem with the analysis of other material systems, micro and macro level institutions,

governments, policies, and economics. Wave Theory conceptualizes the analysis of these three trajectories of materiality as critical and mutually constitutive. Any one complete inquiry in regards to racial inequality in education must aim to explicate context specific analyses of the relationship between race, class, gender, nation and other context dependent hierarchical ways a given society is organized in the context of the economic mode of production for which said identities have been historically rendered significant.

Wave Theory directs us to the analysis of hegemony. (Gramsci, 1992) The hegemonic processes are mapped throughout the material relations and institutions of civil society, “schooling, the family, churches and religious life, cultural organization, so called private relations, gender, sexual and ethnic identities, etc.” (Hall, 1986, pg. 18) Hegemony is conceived as the “educative and formative” apparatus of the state that operates not on coercion as in military coercion, but through the ideological interpellation of subjects. To quote: “The modern state exercises moral and educative leadership – ‘it plans, urges, incites, solicits, punishes.’ It is where the bloc of social forces which dominates over it not only justifies and maintains its domination but wins by leadership and authority the active consent of those over whom it rules.” (Hall, 1986, pg. 19) Ideology here is mapped in its materiality two trajectories. The first is the trajectory of signs and representation using the tools of discourse analysis, and the second is the materialization of ideology vis a vis its institutionalization throughout the social formation.

With this general historical framework having been established, for Gramsci we must then begin to map the movement of historical forces and the relations of force. 'Relations of force' suggests the conditions that are created in the economic, political and ideological domains which limit the movement of people and things. These are also the conditions that create particular subjective positions that are both imposed upon people and also taken up in the everyday contexts of social life. (Hall, 1986; Foucault , 1980; Pedroni, 2006)

Socio-Political Trajectory

Along the socio-political trajectory, Wave Theory argues that Neoliberalism functions through differentiation and that there is a fundamentally racialized shaping of neoliberal globalization. (Melamed, 2011; Hall, 1991) The trajectories of differentiation, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion and other hierarchical identities are semi-autonomous structures which must be mapped and analyzed in their own right, with attention to their own distinguishing features and dynamics as trajectories upon which power is exercised and claimed. However, Wave Theory also argues that these *semi-autonomous* trajectories, and anti-racist strategies, must be mapped in relationship to their embeddedness in both state processes and the structures of neoliberal globalization. Without this latter step, any mapping of the processes of racism and racial exploitation and inequality would be incomplete and dematerializing. (Melamed, 2011; Hall, 1991) Thus a mapping of racism and anti-racism from the micro level of the individual, onto the macro social structures of society is important. Finally Wave Theory

suggests that a spatial mapping of race and racism rematerializes race and avoids the pitfalls of biological and cultural theories of racial inequality.

Wave Theory also draws on theories of space and spatiality and specifically racialized spatialization, the appropriation of educational space and the production of racialized educational space (Appadurai, 1990; Castells, 1989, 1996; Urry, 2000; Sassen, 2000; Brenner, 1999; Lipman, 2011). Wave Theory deploys the analysis of discourse to identify how discourses about race justify the inclusion and exclusion of racialized subjects from educational space, and how these processes of inclusion and exclusion produce and perpetuate patterns of inequality. Wave Theory also looks at the educational relevance of the appropriation and racialization of urban spaces in times of globalization. As a theory of resistance, Wave Theory maps contradictions that occur in “places,” despite the way they are ideologically represented in and as educational and urban “spaces” as such. (Castells, 1989) Wave Theory follows Stuart Hall’s analysis of Gramscian suggestions for the analysis of race along the following critical steps that will be discussed in relation to their analysis as spatial phenomena:

First, The materiality of race must be mapped with historical specificity (Hall, 1986). Racism varies in its form and salience in geographically specific regions and time specific historical periods. Racism then must be mapped according to its various forms, its relation to other structures and processes, and its effects (Hall, 1986). Second, Hall notes that there is no “homogeneous law of development” for racism and its ‘uneven’ development across and within social formations, as opposed to lessening the impact of

racism, “may help to deepen and exacerbate these contradictory sectoral antagonisms.”
(Hall, 1986, pg. 24)

Third, the relationship between race and class must be mapped in a non-reductive way where race and class are not conceptualized in competition with the other for status of which trajectory is the most fundamental, but where the fundamentally racialized shaping of the capitalist system is offered a richer and fuller description. Wave Theory then focuses on how the “regime of capital can function through differentiation and difference, rather than through similarity and identity...(and) the cultural, social, national, ethnic and gendered composition of historically different and specific forms of labour.” (Hall, 1986, pg. 24) Stuart Hall notes that “what needs to be noticed is the persistent way in which these specific, differentiated forms of ‘incorporation’ have consistently been associated with the appearance of racist, ethnically segmentary and other similar social features.” (Hall, 1986, pg. 26)

Fourth, Stuart Hall reminds us that subjects who are fundamentally exploited by the class structuring of society, experience their exploitation along different trajectories and in different ways and there is no ‘ideological unification’ that identifies working class subjects. (Hall, 1986)

Fifth, it is important to study how “classes actually do behave” as opposed to how they should behave. Hall argues that Gramsci knows that “politics has its own “relatively autonomous” forms, tempos, trajectories, which need to be studied in their own right, with their own, distinctive concepts, and with attention to their real and retroactive effects.” (Hall, 1986, pg. 26)

Sixth, race and racism must be studied in relation to the state and with Gramsci's "domination-direction distinction." The institutions of "so called 'civil society' ...play an absolutely vital role in giving, sustaining and reproducing different societies in a racially structured form." (Hall, 1986, pg. 26)

Seventh, the realm of culture, "the actual, grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages, and customs of any specific historical society," are important for mapping in the sense that culture is "a crucial site for the construction of hegemony." (Hall, 1986, pg. 26) Hall (1986) argues that further theorization is necessary of the contradictory positioning and subjectivity of the subjugated. To quote: "He (Gramsci) shows how the so-called 'self' which underpins these ideological formations is not a unified but a contradictory subject and a social construction. He (Gramsci) thus helps us to understand one of the most common, least explained features of 'racism': the 'subjection of the victims of racism to the mystifications of the very racist ideologies which imprison and define them." (Hall, 1986, pg. 27) Here the materiality of ideological struggle is revealed. Racism is an ideology in the first right which is materialized through action and institutionalization and dematerialized in definitions of materiality which materialize race in the first instance vis a vis a "homogeneous, non-contradictory conception of consciousness and of ideology." (Hall, 1986, pg. 28)

Economic Trajectory

Methodologically Wave Theory draws heavily on the work of political geographers as well, and specifically Brenner's elaboration of "geographies of actually existing Neoliberalism" as well as his elaboration of "processes of neoliberalisation." (Brenner, 2002; Brenner, 2010; Kamat, 2011) These frameworks assume that Neoliberalism is not a sweeping force that manifests in predictable arrangements of power across geographic spaces and policy contexts, thus the phrase "actually existing Neoliberalism." Rather, neoliberal globalization articulates with local and national level politics as a contested regime, thus the phrase "processes of neoliberalization." Wave Theory as a methodology for doing educational policy research on racial inequality seeks to describe the articulation of Neoliberalism with already existing racial hierarchies and histories of racist exploitation. (Lugo, 2008; Kamat, 2004)

The articulation of neoliberal globalization with post colonial and neocolonial histories exacerbates the racial divide and gender divide and incorporates gendered and racialized bodies into the neoliberal capitalist system. (Melamed, 2012) Within the US when we look at the case of Detroit, or post Katrina New Orleans, or national and local policies towards immigration along the border with Mexico, and how working class and poor women in particular are oppressed and exploited in these "actually existing" and geographically specific instances of neoliberal exploitation, we find undeniable examples of how racism and white nationalist US patriarchy emerge as powerful explanatory frameworks for understanding inequality and the dynamics of neoliberal exploitation (Brenner, 2002; Lugo, 2008).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that we can overcome the weaknesses of the biological, cultural- sociological and cultural-psychological approaches in education, that I discussed in chapters 3 and 4, by focusing on how we map and construct our the analyses of the hostile environment in which youth are forced to attend schools. With critical perspectives on space help us to approach how environments impact educational outcomes and how the work and home life impacts educational outcomes, without blaming the victim. With studies of cultural geography we can start to move out of the US centric frameworks and start to understand how our fates are intimately connected with the lives of people who seem so far away, yet are closer than we ever could have imagined because of the new international division of labor and the instantaneous movement of finance capital. With ethnography we can move away from broad - brush stroke descriptions of history to reveal critical contradictions that only come out of intense, focused inquiries but that can inform policy and our understanding of how power works both locally and at large. With historiography we can get a sense of the epic memory, how our current lives are connected and disconnected from the lives of generations past, and what the possibilities are for the future. We need these analytical and descriptive tools that allow us to map how no two instantiations of power are ever exactly the same.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

My research engages debates on US model minority politics in the context of neoliberal globalization, the overarching policy direction of our time. I used discourse analysis to analyze theoretical and methodological trends in two archives of educational research: research on Asians and Asian Americans in US education, on South Asians and South Asian Americans in US education. Borrowing largely from the discussion in Antonia Darder's book, *Culture and Power in the Classroom*, I organized the research on Asians and South Asians into two primary trends, conservative educational discourses and liberal educational discourses. Within these two primary trends I further found the following categories to be most useful for categorizing the research on Asians and South Asians specifically: biological, cultural-sociological, and cultural-psychological. I presented arguments that identified the limitations of each trend.

My discussion and analysis of the limitations were largely drawn from critiques of 'multiculturalism' in education. (McCarthy, 1998, 1990, 1991; McCarthy, Bulut & Patel, 2013) I identified the limitations of approaches that, intentionally or unintentionally, essentialize race along the biological, cultural- psychological or cultural - sociological trajectories such as critical race theory, racial formation theory, phenomenology and other approaches that are subsumed under the broad category of multiculturalism. (Stam and Shohat, 2005) The example of Asians and South Asians in US education was illustrated to make a broader argument about the uses and limitations of these powerful trends in the analysis of race and education.

Following Jodi Melamed's (2011) argument in *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*, as well as Antonia Darder's (1991) argument in *Culture and Power in the Classroom*, amongst other significant texts cited herein, I argued that trends in race analyzing in education, while in many cases pointing out inequalities that are systematically produced and sustained in US society and social structures, largely abstract the analysis of racism from the analysis of neoliberal globalization and 'dematerialize' anti-racism and social justice based educational research initiatives. (Darder, 2012; Melamed, 2011) This is not an argument against the prevalence and currency of white supremacy as a still powerful and pervasive structural and social force. Following these and other thinkers, I would in fact argue that white supremacy is more powerful because of neoliberal globalization. (Melamed, 2011; Darder, 2012) Moreover, within education itself, white supremacy remains powerful because of the kind of theorizing that abstracts race and racism from its foundation in the social and structural field, that is radically dynamic and historical.

In more specific terms, in this dissertation I argue that the model minority discourse in the politics of US education has two dimensions best delineated with reference to national context. The US domestic policy dimension positions Asians as an ideal type minority - intellectually and culturally superior to African Americans and Latinos, the most frequent reference point in the literature. This is despite the fact of class variation within all three racial groups. The international dimension positions Asians as perpetual foreigners, and the rise of so called tiger economies as a threat to national security, and particularly to the role of the US as a global political and economic

superpower. That an Asian can be at once held both as a model minority and a foreign threat points to the fact that despite the irrational logic and hypocrisy of racism, the logics of colonialism still hold continual force and power as an institutional fact that determining power over the path dependent logics of Neoliberalism in the US. (Brenner, 2002)

As a hegemonic mechanism, articulated with the twin pillars of meritocracy and colorblindness, the model minority discourse has been historically deployed in the US since the 1960's to legitimize what accumulates in a series of domestic neoliberal reforms to public education that disproportionately threaten people of color and poor people. With the shift from an industrial to a knowledge and service based economy, the increasing surplus of, poor labor, and particularly poor black and brown labor, is addressed by the US State vis a vis education by a school to prison pipeline for some cases, and for other cases by low skilled and low income job trajectories. In the meantime, cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, cuts to social security benefits, cuts to low income housing, unemployment benefits, cuts to welfare programs and a range of other social institutions and policy reforms associated with social welfarism enable a politics of death that expunges and simply gets rid of the surplus poor bodies.

As the State deploys the model minority discourse, particularly within the education sector, to justify the roll back of social welfare programs and roll out of Neoliberalism, it simultaneously increases military and department of defense funding and US bombs pave the way for US led multinational corporate expansion across lands that belong to the poorest people on earth.

Quite simply, I have found that the model minority politic in education is a politics of exploitation, exclusion, denial, and ultimately, of death, that attempts to sabotage the responsibility that the State holds for creating and sustaining inequality by pointing the finger at “tiger” economies, “tiger” moms, “tiger” schools and “tiger” students in the international dimension of the discourse and US working class, poor and lumpen, people of color in the domestic dimension of the discourse.

That being said, even though model minority politics has disastrous consequences for people of color and poor people, and even though education in the US is supposed to be a democratic civil institution, the model minority question remains inadequately addressed by education policy frameworks which effectively cede ground to neoliberals, yet deploy an anti-racist and critical discourse on race, gender and the range of identities.

In my research I have found that conservative and liberal approaches to analyzing racial inequality in education largely affirm racist assumptions, lie on a historical continuum with theories of genetic racial difference, and are limited to critiques of how capitalism is racist, but not on how the capitalist system itself is the foundation of racism in society. In other words, I argue against the notion that there is an essentialized propensity in human beings to assert power over the ‘other.’ I argue that this propensity is a social and historical phenomena linked with the ideology and mechanics of capitalism come neoliberal globalization.

Conservative and liberal approaches, whether they are challenging or corroborating the thesis, tend to locate the source of the reproduction of racial

inequality, and in this case supposed Asian superiority, in the realm of psychological and sociological variables related to cultural attitudes, family and parenting. These discourses largely position Asians as a coherent, whole, characterizable racial unit. They largely sideline the role that the economic and political organization of state space plays on opportunity structures in education and on racial differences in educational access.

A second critique is of these approaches as methodology. Specifically, in analyzing model minority politics in the US, the biological, cultural-sociological and cultural-psychological approaches tend to conveniently ignore realities associated with the international division of labor and the impact of transnational power relations, related to gender, religion, caste and other social identities on racial relations in the US. For example, if Asians were model minorities, then the so-called Asian tiger countries would not have some of the largest margins of poverty in the world. The US centrism of these approaches can only further exacerbate inequality within the US and beyond, given the analytics upon which important decisions related to policy are incorrect to begin with.

After having pointed out the analytical limitations of conservative and liberal approaches to analyzing race in education, and Asians and South Asians specifically, I then turned to the development of Wave Theory. Wave Theory is nothing new, in the positivist science sense of the term 'new'. It represents an emergent reading of how inequality can be mapped in education and how social justice based initiatives can be rematerialized. (Melamed, 2011) Wave Theory was inspired most directly by the works of Cameron McCarthy in the area of cultural studies and education, particularly his early

work on *Nonsynchrony* and multiculturalism in education. Wave Theory is also strongly influenced by my reading of ethnographies that critically engage the relationship between globalization and post-colonialism in the US, and particularly Alejandro Lugo's compassionate treatment of the working class, *Fragmented Lives, Assembled Parts: Culture, Capitalism and Conquest on the US Mexico Border*. Within education specifically, Wave Theory is most influenced by the work of Stuart Hall, Cameron McCarthy, Antonia Darder, Alejandro Lugo, Paulo Friere, Sangeeta Kamat, Pauline Lipmann, Thomas Pedroni, Antonio Gramsci, Donna Haraway, Jodi Melamed, Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore.

Against mainstream descriptions of globalization as a sweeping force that is slowly eroding the power of the State as an arbiter of the direction of domestic and international political and economic development, Wave Theory, following the work of political geographers such as Henri Lefebvre, Nik Brenner and Sangeeta Kamat, argues that under Neoliberalism the state is strengthening its potential as the ultimate authority over what happens politically, economically and socially within and between territorial confines. Wave Theory draws on post-colonial theory to argue that Neoliberalism in education articulates with the discourse and politics of racial equality and racial justice, to further push a neoliberal agenda in education and capitalize on education. In other words, against the conservative and liberal approaches in education, Wave Theory argues that any productive analysis of racial inequality in education, must be developed in relation to how race and racism has evolved in state space and in relationship to neoliberal globalization. This is the only way that capitalist entrepreneurs

and their state level cronies can be held accountable for their continued exploitation of communities of color and poor people, while deploying the discourse of social justice and anti-racism to further enable this exploitation – hegemony at work.

In sum then, Wave Theory maps the way that neoliberal globalization is articulating with post colonial racial histories to map how power is being rapidly re-organized in education in order to harness its potential as a profit producing institution.

Having completed this dissertation I find it very important to increase research initiatives on South Asians in the US. I think this is important because there is very little information available about how South Asians, and particularly South Asian youth and children, experience education. Further, the research that does exist is so steeped in the model minority politic that it in fact distorts the realities of South Asian education and transforms schools into zones of oppression.

Further, on college campuses one simply has to look around to see the soaring numbers of students from Asia entering the US through preferential Visa programs. Yet, the fear of the rise of China, for example, and that its economy and capabilities will surpass the US has created an outrage and angst in the US public, that often manifests in hate crimes against Asians and Asian Americans, or just simply resentments for taking a spot on campus that “belonged” to an American. Meanwhile Asians and Asian Americans end up taking the same jobs whites have for less pay, or end up taking working class and poor jobs because we simply don’t have a US education or transferable skills in the US environment.

Further I suggest critical research on race that is grounded in dynamic, socio-historical analyses, such as Wave Theory, as opposed to analyses that reify colonial discourses of race essentialism, whether biological, psychological or sociological essentialism. Educational policy research is steeped in a positivist tradition decorated with language about educational outcomes and developmental trajectories. This is because the state is thoroughly divesting in public education and the competition for resources is tight. Recent research on neoliberal globalization is promising particularly in the way it deploys the ethnographic method. Educational policy research on race and racism must get past its US nationalism and map the racial relationship between education “here” and education “there.” This is not simply because the US has a responsibility to people around the world, but because even within the US borders inequality is better mapped and anti-racism better strategized when we can see it in its multiple, material trajectories.

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